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Hafa Adai!

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WITH HR 83'S PASSAGE

E-2C investors jubilant

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

E-2C investors' sleepless nights monitoring Congress' action on H.R. 83 finally bore fruit over the weekend when the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed the insular areas bill that contained a provision extending for another five years the stay of 261 foreign investors who came to the islands under the CNMI's own immigration law prior to 2009.

See E-2C on Page 4

UFO'S LAST EVENT OF THE YEAR

JAYSON CAMACHO

From left to right: 3rd runner-up Jian Marquez, 1st runner-up Kristan Isip, That's My Boy winner Jeroen Montenejo, second runner-up Irie Camacho, and fourth runner-up Deejay Santomin have their picture taken after the announcement of the winners in the United Filipino Organizations' "That's My Boy" competition on Saturday at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

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Justices reverse Crisostomo's conviction on 'ice' possession

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has found unlawful the police officers' early morning stop of a vehicle that almost collided with their police cruiser in a beach "known as an area for drug users" and vacated the conviction of one of the car's two passengers, Joseph A. Crisostomo, on a count of illegal possession of methamphetamine or "ice."

Police did not have reasonable suspicion to make the initial stop and there-

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Local

American Red Cross assists families of Dandan house fire

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Two families were affected and displaced by the fire, which completely destroyed their home.

The American Red Cross provided assistance to families of a house fire in Dandan Village on Flame Tree Drive on the morning of Dec. 13, 2014. Two families were affected and displaced by the fire, which completely destroyed their home. No one was injured in the fire. The American Red Cross Disaster Action Team responded to the fire scene and provided the families with much needed assistance for temporary shelter, food, clothing and other personal items.

"The American Red Cross is extremely grateful for the support of our generous donors and community that enable us to continue the Red Cross Mission of providing hope and the means for recovery to victims of disasters," said Paul W. Camacho, Emergency Services Director of the American Red Cross.

For information regarding the Red Cross, contact Camacho at 670-234-3459. ***(ARC)***

7th Annual Operation CNMI Homefront Support
On behalf of the 2014 Operation Homefront Support Team we would like to thank the numerous business and individuals that made this event possible so that we could give back to those that make the ultimate sacrifice.
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Thank you so much for your continued support & Happy Holidays!
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Inos approves bill giving $9K allowance for ill Rota patients

Gov. Eloy S. Inos last Friday signed a bill appropriating $9,000 from local license fees for poker and pachinko and slot machines on Rota for the subsistence allowance of residents of the island who are undergoing dialysis and treatment for terminal illnesses off-island.

House Local Bill 18-67 is now Rota Local Law No. 18-18. It passed the Rota Legislative Delegation last Dec. 2.

The bill originally sought to earmark only $4,500 for the subsistence allowance of the patients, but after careful review the delegation found out that more people needed help for their illnesses, hence the doubling of the appropriation.

Under the law, "The monthly subsistence allowance for September 2014 shall be partially paid and not to exceed $200" and the expenditure authority will the Department of Finance.

Rota Legislative Delegation chair Rep. Teresita A. Santos said at last count there are nearly 40 people from Rota currently undergoing dialysis and suffering from other terminal illnesses. Santos is the author of HLB 18-67.

Santos, who will be a first-time senator in the 19th CNMI Legislature come January 2015, said "the introduction of bills like HLB 18-67 occurs only when renewal of poker fees are paid, which appropriation primarily provides funds for dialysis and terminally ill patients." ***(Mark Rabago)***

Louder voice for Pacific islands at UN General Assembly

NOUMEA, New Caledonia--Greater prominence for Pacific Islands' perspectives on global and regional development issues within the United Nations system is expected to be a major outcome of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community becoming an observer to the UN General Assembly.

SPC was formally granted observer status overnight following the adoption of a resolution by the UN General Assembly in New York City.

The resolution for the Pacific's largest regional development body to participate as an observer in the sessions and work of the General Assembly was submitted by the Fiji delegation following a decision taken at the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Pacific Community in November 2013, which Fiji chaired. SPC will also be able to make observer statements at the UNGA.

The Director-General of SPC, Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, has welcomed the news, saying it is a significant breakthrough for the Pacific Community.

"By granting SPC observer status to the United Nations, it is our hope the unique development challenges facing Pacific Island countries and territories will be better understood and appreciated by the international community, and taken into account in decision making.

"Ultimately, our members want this greater access to the UN family to result in the aspirations of Pacific people being realized," Dr Tukuitonga said.

In a communique, the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN, Ambassador Peter Thomson said: "We welcome the granting of observer status to the Pacific Community, coming as it does at the very important juncture, as we jointly design the Post-2015 Development Agenda."

SPC is an international development organization owned and governed by its 26 Pacific Community members--all 22 Pacific Island countries and territories plus New Zealand, Australia, France and the United States of America.

Founded in 1947, SPC draws upon skills and capabilities from around the world to empower Pacific people, providing a range of important scientific and technical support, including in the fields of public health, fisheries, energy, agricultural development, disaster risk reduction and statistics. ***(SPC)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Birthday greetings going out to our handsome son, Hank K. Arurang Jr., who will be celebrating his birthday after work tonight. Here's to hoping all your birthday dreams and wishes come true. Much love always from Dad, Mom, Conseco and Chicko.

DUE TO CNMI SUPREME COURT'S RULING; ONE PRESENTENCE INVESTIGATOR AVAILABLE

Sentencing of criminals may be delayed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

With only one presentence investigator/writer for the Superior Court, the new sentencing of a dive master who was found guilty of killing and getting a protected spotted eagle ray will take place in May 2015, a year later from the day of a bench trial that lasted only a day.

At a hearing yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho continued the new sentencing of Hu Jie Fang for May 6, 2015 at 9am.

Camacho noted that CNMI probation officer Simram W. Simram wrote him, requesting to give him more time to prepare the presentence investigation and postpone the new sentencing of Fang.

In the letter, Simram disclosed that he is the only presentence investigator/writer for the court and is currently handling 15 presentence investigation cases on top of regular probation supervision cases.

The CNMI Supreme Court recently issued an opinion that presentence investigation report shall be conducted upon a defendant's request. The high court's ruling basically takes away trial judges' discretion whether to order a presentence investigation report or not.

The high court's opinion may delay sentencing of criminals due to the backlog in presentence investigation reports.

In Fang's case, Judge Camacho found Fang guilty of one count of ray protection at a bench trial last June 8. Witnesses testified that Fang shot a three feet wide spotted eagle ray with a spear gun and took the ray on Jan 15, 2014.

Less than two weeks later after the trial, Camacho conducted the sentencing hearing and ordered the defendant to spend the maximum sentence of six months in prison.

Assistant public defender Matthew Meyer, counsel for Fang, insisted yesterday that a presentence investigation report be conducted in this case.

Camacho ordered the Probation Office to submit the presentence investigation report on April 17, 2015, and directed the parties to file their sentencing memorandum brief on May 1, 2015.

Camacho noted that due to the numerous requests for a presentence investigation report, a number that is expected to increase, the sentencing hearing in Fang's case will now occur a year later from the date of the one-day bench trial.

'THAT'S MY BOY!' JAYSON CAMACHO
The 16 candidates of the United Filipino Organizations' competition "That's My Boy" join the judges for a group photo at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

Quichocho's, wife's motion for judgment in their favor denied

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The federal court denied yesterday a motion by disbarred lawyer Ramon K. Quichocho and his wife, Frances, to issue a judgment in their favor despite a jury's verdict that found them guilty in the racketeering lawsuit filed against them by businesswoman Jung Ja Kim.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ruled that because the Quichochos' motion was untimely filed and that the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure circumscribe the court's discretion to extend deadlines for judgment notwithstanding the verdict or new trial motions, she will deny the motion.

Manglona said the judgment was entered on April 3, 2014, and the electronic notice was provided to counsel that same day.

The judge pointed out that a motion for judgment notwithstanding a verdict or for a new trial must have been submitted 28 days later, on or before May 1, 2014.

Manglona said the Quichochos' motion was filed on May 2, 2014, at 12:22am—a day late.

In March 28, a federal jury reached a unanimous verdict holding the Quichocho couple and his law form liable to pay $2.4 million in damages to Kim.

The jury, however, found Kim liable to pay Quichocho and his law firm $48,221 in legal fees.

In Quichochos' motion, attorney Michael Dotts asserted that Kim failed to prove that he engaged in a "pattern of racketeering activity" and that the court should issue a judgment in their favor.

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PSS hopes to evaluate As Matuis property for possible north side school

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The Public School System recently eyed its northernmost property for a possible school but "nothing is immediate right now," according to CNMI State Board of Education chair Herman Guerrero, who said PSS is still viewing its options.

Guerrero said he initially thought the area, about 44,485 square meters, had too many slopes, but in a recent visit with Education Commissioner Dr. Rita Sablan, he has reconsidered.

"I think it would make an excellent campus," Guerrero said an interview yesterday. "It's not going to require major earthmoving…but at the recommendation of the CIP coordinator we need to do a topography study to have a better understanding what it really is going look like," he said.

Sablan, in her report to the board last week, said she hoped the property could be reviewed in the near future to see what PSS could do to expand its schools in the north side of Saipan.

"It's a nice fit for about 300 to 400 students," she told the board.

Besides topography, Guerrero said PSS has other factors to look at.

He cited the demographic shift of population and students to the "central" part of the island near Marianas High School, which reportedly has an all-time high enrollment this year of 1,500-plus students, as something to look at.

He said PSS does not have properties in the central area of the island, and so if a new high school were built, they would have to figure out if they'd need to "rezone" populations to move students north.

He also said future homesteads could call for the need of a school in the area.

"We need to have a conversation with Public Lands if they're going to have any plans in the near future to expand any homesteads up in that area, because if you do, you will certainly have families building houses over there," he said.

He said timelines and requirements to build these homesteads would also have to be factored in.

It is because of these factors that there is "nothing immediate right now."

"We are checking what our options are," he said.

"The Northern High School" if constructed could accommodate 296 students from Tanapag Middle School, according to the PSS CIP office.

The property is 44,485 square meters and is located at the corner of Matansa Drive and Suito Drive in As Matuis, directly past the La Fiesta Mall.

It is similar in scale to Dandan Middle School, which is 49,444 square meters; Oleai Elementary School and Oleai Headstart, which are 42, 120 square meters; and William S. Reyes Elementary School and CK Headstart, which are 43,040 square meters.

PCC hosts Thanksgiving Endowment fundraiser

On Nov. 26, 2014, the Palau Community College held its annual Thanksgiving Endowment Fundraiser at the Mesekiu Bai located at the center of the college campus. For the event, the college was able to raise over $50,000 through the sales of tickets, cash donations, and telephone pledges. Over 800b individuals and local businesses purchased raffle tickets in support of the event.

This year's Thanksgiving Endowment Fundraiser had a total of 55 prizes, most donated in kind by local businesses and individuals. The two baby grand prizes were round-trip tickets donated by United Airlines and the grand prize was a choice between a Summer House worth $3,000 or $2,000 cash courtesy of the college. The college would like to congratulate the winner of the grand prize, Celine Reklai, owner of Flamingo Restaurant. The college would also like to congratulate baby grand prize winners, Melekeok State Government and Bheng Mendoza of Ngarchelong State Government.

Palau Community College would also like to thank all the donors, pledgers, and ticket buyers for supporting the Annual PCC Thanksgiving Endowment Fundraiser. Your generous support has greatly assisted Palau's only institution of higher learning in its efforts to secure its future stability! Sponsors for the Endowment Fundraiser include United Airlines, IP&E Palau Inc., Blue Bay Petroleum, Palasia Hotel, Palau National Communications Corporation (PNCC), Palau Royal Resort, Western Caroline Trading Company (WCTC), Carp Island Resort, Surangel & Sons Company, Papago Resort, and the Palau Beach Bungalows. Thank you all for helping in and supporting the 2014 PCC Annual Thanksgiving Endowment Fundraising Event! ***(PCC)***

E-2C

From Page 1

QQ Tours & Travel president James Han said there was a collective sense of relief from E-2C investors when Congress passed H.R. 83 last Friday and Saturday, Saipan time.

Han, who is also president of the Fujian Economic Association and secretary of the Chinese Small Business Association, said many E-2C investors on Saipan were practically glued to their laptops over the weekend watching U.S. House and U.S. Senate sessions; especially when took up the territorial bill that included three provisions that affected CNMI immigration.

"All Chinese investors were worried and were watching all the voting online. Most didn't sleep. We're really worried. We've been allowed on Saipan for many years and we're very happy here. We have nowhere to go so at least we have five more years now," said Han in a telephone interview with *Saipan Tribune* last night.

He said it was very important for them that the E-2C program is extended because unlike other foreign nationals doing business in the CNMI, Chinese investors cannot apply for the E-2 program.

"Everybody looks like in relief now specially for the Chinese businesses because they're not qualified for E-2 unlike Japanese, Korean, and Filipino longtime investors."

He said this is so because China is not a favored trading country of the U.S.

Han added that E-2C investors are also not eligible for President Barrack Obama's executive action on immigration. "We're not eligible for Obama's immigration plan because we're legal."

The White House already came out in public, saying that Obama will sign off on the bill.

The QQ Tours & Travel president also said most Chinese E-2C visa holders on the island operate anything from mom-and-pop stores, to giant supermarkets, to Laundromats, to beauty parlors and restaurants, and the many car rentals that now dot the sides of Beach Road.

These business hire anywhere from five to 30 workers. Sadly, he said, some E-2C investors have already left the island, shuttering their restaurants and stores because of the uncertainty of the grandfathered foreign investor program.

"Some already close[d] and moved out; these are mostly restaurants. Now those who remain are into retail, stores, car rental, beauty parlors, some do business with hotels, and some are tourism-related businesses," added Han.

On behalf of the E-2C investors, Han said he would like to extend his appreciation to Congress for its passage of H.R. 83. He also thanked Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan for working hard on the bill's passage and Gov. Eloy S. Inos and the CNMI Legislature for writing a letter to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R-NJ) requesting assistance and passing a resolution urging Congress to pass the measure, respectively.

Kevin Market owner Kevin Tang said the imminent passage of H.R. 83 into law is good news. He said long-term foreign investors on the islands are already comfortable doing business in the CNMI, work extremely hard, and are willing to invest more to improve the local economy.

Tang said the five-year extension accorded by H.R. 83 would allow E-2C investors to transition to an E-B5 status, which has a threshold of $500,000. Since investments since 1990 are included, many E-2C investors have already met that requirement.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan said the islands' largest business organization is "obviously extremely excited" about the passage of the bill as it also includes a provision barring claims of asylum within the CNMI that has helped assure that tourists from China can come to the islands without need for a visa.

"It's very crucial to the expansion of the CNMI tourism industry with the growth of the Chinese market specifically being addressed."

Sablan said the local tourism industry's growth is now dependent on this particular market. "Not see much growth in other markets even though they're equally important."

He said the bill taking care of E-2C investors is another plus along with the extension of the CNMI and Guam's exemption on H visa caps.

Alex Sablan also thanked Delegate Sablan and Inos for their work in the passage of the bill.

He is also looking forward to the President's signature on the bill, which curiously is one of the few times a territorial bill was used as a vehicle to pass the federal government spending measure, in this case $1.1 trillion for fiscal year 2015.

"It's probably the only time in the history of the U.S. that a territorial bill actually saved the nation," he said.

Senate President Ralph DLG. Torres (R-Saipan), for his part, said he's glad that Congress passed H.R. 83.

"At least the E-2C investors now have the comfort of staying on island and not forced to leave. It's also an opportunity for us to continue to work for a better economy. Some businessmen have been here 15 and 20 years and have done well. They can plunk down more investments to the betterment of the local economy," he said.

House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan) echoed Torres' gratitude.

"We're very, very grateful for this timely action. We only have a few days left. We're very fortunate they were able to get it through in the 11th hour. I join the governor and Kilili for commending the various individuals in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House who made this happen."

Rep. Antonio Sablan (Ind-Saipan), who authored a House resolution urging Congress to extend the E-2C program, said the passage of H.R. 83 augurs well for the CNMI.

"Of course we're happy. That's why we introduced that resolution. We want the U.S. Congress to understand that that's also the CNMI Legislature's position. We are in support of extending the E-2C program to ensure that the businesses covered by this visa program continue to run and operate their businesses legally. We don't want at this time to lose any business revenue of any kind, to do what we can to make sure the economy will continue its course toward recovery."

JUSTICES

From Page 1

fore the evidence gained during the stop is suppressed, said the high court's opinion penned Friday by Associate Justice Perry B. Inos and concurred by Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and Associate Justice John A. Manglona.

In vacating Crisostomo's conviction, the justices ruled that it was an error to label the beach as a high-crime area solely on generalized assertions that an area is well-known for certain illegal activities.

The justices said that because the totality of the circumstances did not give the officers reasonable suspicion of a felony or a traffic-code infraction, they reverse Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman's order denying Crisostomo's motion to suppress evidence.

"Under the exclusionary rule, evidence obtained by police through unlawful means usually must be suppressed," said the justices, citing precedent.

Last February, Crisostomo was convicted of possession of "ice" and criminal contempt. Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho sentenced him to the maximum of five years and six months in prison without the possibility of parole.

Crisostomo, through assistant public defender Michael A. Sato, appealed to the CNMI Supreme Court.

The issue that Sato presented on the appeal was whether Judge Wiseman erred in finding reasonable suspicion for a traffic stop, when the police officers initiated the stop without any objective reasons for suspecting wrongdoing. The officers detained and conducted a search on Crisostomo, which Sato said was a violation of his client's Fourth Amendment right.

The other issue that Sato presented was whether the Superior Court erred by admitting the evidence recovered as a result of the search on Crisostomo, when that evidence was obtained from an unlawful search that violated the defendant's Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures.

The case arose from an incident on Jan. 11, 2012, at 3:17am, when police officers Tyrone Teregeyo and T.J. Yangetmai did a routine check at a secluded beach in Susupe, Saipan. The area is routinely checked by the police because it is known for drug related crime.

As the officers turned into the dirt road aboard a marked police vehicle, a Toyota Tercel car that was parked in the middle of the one-lane road turned on its engine and headlights.

The car sped directly toward the officers' vehicle, almost causing a head-on collision. The officers searched the backseat of the car and found a glass tube suspected to be drug paraphernalia.

Crisostomo, who was a passenger, and his companion were arrested for possession of less than a gram of "ice." Crisostomo's companion entered a guilty plea.

Sato argued, among other things, that the trial court erred by finding suspicion for the traffic stop because the police officer was unable to articulate objective reasons that meet a totality of the circumstances test to establish reasonable suspicion of legal wrongdoing to justify the officer's decision to initiate the stop of Crisostomo's vehicle.

Then-assistant attorney general Margo Brown-Badawy said the high court should uphold Crisostomo's conviction. She said the officers had multiple reasons to develop a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity as Crisostomo was in a place believed to be a high-crime area at a highly unusual time.

Brown-Badawy asserted, among other things, that upon conducting an investigatory detention, officers saw drug paraphernalia in plain view.

In their opinion, the justices said there was insufficient evidence to support a finding that the beach was a high-crime area.

The justices said the officers never provided the court the data necessary to independently review whether the beach was, in fact, a high-crime area.

The justices said the police lacked reasonable suspicion of either a traffic-code violation because the evidence does not support that the car was driving at an imprudent speed.

The justices noted that the area was too small and rugged to build up a high rate of speed.

"What's left is that Crisostomo was at the beach at a late hour—but being out and about late at night is not enough to create reasonable suspicion," the justices said.

Crisostomo is currently serving life imprisonment for kidnapping, raping, killing, and robbing bartender Emerita R. Romero. He is also appealing his conviction in that case.

JROTC prepares for pilot assessment next year

» Program reports over 784 students enrolled

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

A total of 784 students are currently enrolled in the Public School System's JROTC program, according to PSS associate commissioner for student and support services Yvonne Pangelinan.

On Tinian, there are 77 cadets; on Rota, 45; in Saipan Southern High School, 147 cadets; Kagman High School, 242; and in Marianas High School, 264, according to Pangelinan in a report to the Board of Education last week.

For the Leadership Corps, a similar program for middle schools, there are 125 enrolled in Dandan Middle School; 228 for Hopwood Junior High School; 90 for San Antonio Middle School; 76 for Tanapag Middle School; 25 for Rota Hocog Inos Jr. Sr. High School; and no reported cadets at the Tinian Junior High as of last week.

According to Pangelinan, a program assessment pilot is scheduled for Feb. 28 to March 7 next year. A team will be visiting the Pacific region to conduct the assessment, she said.

"The CNMI, very fortunately, will be one of the first to go through the assessment pilot, which means we'll have some upper hand in knowing what the criteria is," she said.

In December this month, she said the program's priority is to work with all its Army instructors and senior Army instructors on professional development for the assessment criteria.

She said this was basically to see what the instructors in schools are doing, and to work on "smart goals" aligned with continuous improvement and with district JROTC goals.

The assessment pilot next year is based on McREL standards, according to Pangelinan. She said the curriculum in place in all schools with JROTC or Leadership Corps have curriculum managers online and lesson plans that are all in line with this.

Also this school year, they have worked on defensive driving certifications for AIs and SAIs on Rota, which she said she knows is a "big concern."

"We haven't been able to get the defensive driving there yet. I think we are scheduled for December because we have to work with [Department of Public Safety] in making sure that their trainers are available on Saipan or either on Rota," she said.

She said this was discussed with RHI, and there are now plans in place to provide compensation to bus drivers to transfer the students so they can do their drill competitions, or drill practices.

In November, a budget for JROTC and Leadership Corps was submitted, according to Pangelinan. She said they are working on a provisional contract to replace one of the SAIs that is leaving one of their schools, and that they have potential candidates to fill this slot.

Guam mayors stop gambling at Tiyan grounds

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Village mayors have ceased fiesta-related gambling at the Tiyan Carnival Grounds after concerns were raised last month about its legality, said governor's office spokesman Julius Santos.

Santos said no mayors have asked to use the site for fiesta-related gambling next year.

Linala Sin Casino, a group that opposes casino gambling on Guam, raised concerns about gambling continuing in Tiyan after the Liberation Day carnival had closed in August.

Villages have been using the Tiyan site for gambling operations as part of their annual fiestas, said Sinajana Mayor Robert Hofmann, who also serves as vice president of the Mayors' Council of Guam. He said village mayors had been using the site over the last five months with the governor's approval.

The governor's office last month said it was unaware mayors were continuing to use the Tiyan carnival site for casino gambling.

Santos previously told Pacific Daily News the only villages approved to use the site this year were Asan-Maina and Barrigada.

Asan-Maina Mayor Joana Margaret Blas said she's still deciding whether to submit a request to the governor's office to hold gambling either at the Tiyan site or within the village to raise funds for two upcoming village fiestas and a festival next month.

Asan-Maina was approved by the governor to use the Tiyan location for cockfighting concessions in January of this year, according to letters from the governor's office. All other forms of gambling, including Texas hold 'em, Super Six, blackjack, baccarat, and dice, were to be held in the village.

Blas said having the Tiyan site available was convenient, but she is not disappointed with the governor's decision.

"I'm not upset because of it. I'm content," she said. "You know, we have to follow our leader. If he says we can do it, then we'll go in. If we can't do it, we can sit back again and try other avenues."

The Office of the Attorney General is investigating whether the village mayors took part in unauthorized gambling operations in Tiyan, AGs Office spokeswoman Carlina Charfauros said.

Charfauros said Wednesday she could not yet provide details about the investigation.

The Dededo Mayors Office had planned to use the Tiyan facility for two weekends this month, but was asked by the Department of Revenue and Taxation to discontinue operations while the investigation continues.

Dededo Mayor Melissa Savares said the village had used the site for one weekend only.

"The people came together and let the celebration happen," Savares said. "We were able to do what we anticipated to do for the village fiesta anyway. Nothing stopped us from celebrating our fiesta."

Vice Speaker Benjamin Cruz last month asked the Office of Public Accountability to conduct a financial and compliance audit of the gambling activity at the location.

Public Auditor Doris Flores Brooks confirmed her office plans to audit the gambling activity. She said Wednesday the audit could take about six months.

Cruz, D-Piti, has said he is concerned specifically about the selection and bidding process for the casino operations and whether there is proper taxation and oversight.

Cruz also has questioned the rules of play, including how much the house takes from the wagers and whether winners are issued tax forms.

Eight NMC students get into interisland ecology course

Eight students from the Northern Marianas College will participate in the Ecology of Bird Loss Project's "Island Ecology Course" from Dec. 28 to Jan. 16.

According to EBL, these students will conduct comparative research projects on Saipan, Rota, and Guam. They will later present their results in a symposium at the end of the course.

According to EBL, instructors from several universities will teach on topics including natural history, invasive species, ecology, and conservation.

Six students from the University of Guam are also reportedly in the course.

Three instructors--Ross Miller from UOG, Evan Fricke from the University of Washington, and Dr. Haldre Rogers from Rice University--will teach the 14 students.

Lee Roy Sablan, an NMC alumnus and current undergraduate at UOG, will be a teacher assistant during the course. Travel costs between islands and hotels costs will be covered by EBL.

Students submitted a cover letter, resume, and transcript in getting into the course. ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

Saipan lawmakers OK bill giving $3.1M to SHEFA

The Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation on Thursday passed a bill appropriating $3.72 million for Saipan-centric activities.

House Local Bill 18-63, D2 passed on a unanimous vote of 19 with two absences. It appropriates $3,672,000 from the revenues generated from the poker fees to be collected for fiscal year 2015 for various purposes in the Third Senatorial District.

The lion's share of the funds is allocated to the scholarship program Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance, at $3.1 million, with $100,000 of that for SHEFA operations.

HLB 18-63 also earmarks $105,000 to patients of the Medical Referral Program who have already expended their $50,000 limit; $75,000 to the Saipan Little League Baseball Association; $50,000 for the Tipieew Cultural Village; $30,000 for the Saipan Zoning Office; $30,000 for the paving of a section of Mt. Tapochau Road; $20,000 for the 2015 Liberation Day activities; $15,000 for the 31st Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival; $12,000 for the procurement of two Port-A-Cool 36" evaporator cooler units; $10,000 for the NMI Crime Stoppers; $5,000 for the Agricultural Fair; and $5,000 for the Saipan International Fishing Tournament.

Saipan Little League was earmarked $75,000 for the hosting of the district ($25,000) and Asia-Pacific Regional tournaments ($50,000), while the monies appropriated for the Saipan Zoning Office will cover its enforcement and operations.

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, meanwhile, is expected to use the two Port-A-Cool 36" evaporator cooler units at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, where players and spectators alike have long complained about the venue's humidity.

The Medical Referral Office, for its part, will use the $105,000 as stipend for Saipan and Northern Islands patients.

The balance of the $3.72 million will go to operational funds under the expenditure authority of delegation chair Rep. Ramon Tebuteb ($15,000) and equally distributed to each precinct ($200,000).

The expenditure bill now goes directly to Gov. Eloy S. Inos' desk for approval. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Zoning board approves small drive-through resto in Fina Sisu

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Zoning board has approved an application for conditional use permit for a drive-through restaurant in Fina Sisu.

The proposed project, to be operated by by PCC Corp. as Roberto's Café and Restaurant, will occupy a small existing building near the main highway leading to Chalan Kanoa and As Lito.

PCC Corp. representative Daniel Pacala said that had operated a restaurant before.

"Based on the requirements by Zoning and a favorable response from the community in the area, we want to proceed with the project," Pacala said.

"The drive-through is something like a grab and go. If you have to park, you can buy and then back up," Pacala added.

At the public hearing held at the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe on Dec. 4,

Saipan Zoning chair Diego Blanco raised concerns about the parking spaces and how would it be a drive through if people would be parking and if there were any available tables inside and how would the drive-through work.

Pacala clarified that they do have parking spaces and some tables inside but if people were to order in the restaurant, they would not stay long.

One person at the meeting, Dr. Gene Eagle-Oden, was concerned about the limited parking spaces the proposed location has.

"I have a lot of experience with restaurants and judging by this business plan, it doesn't really seem solid to me and that they didn't make it clear that they don't have enough parking area," Oden said.

Pacala said an apartment complex adjacent to the proposed restaurant has offered the use of its parking spaces. A letter of approval from the apartment owner gave Pacala "the go" to use two parking spaces of the building.

The location for the proposed restaurant has four parking spaces and two more from the apartment complex nearby.

"They don't have to necessarily park; it is a grab and go restaurant. They will be there and then gone in a matter of minutes so parking isn't a problem. At the old location we had more parking spaces but it was a big problem," Pacala said.

The Zoning board eventually approved the conditional use permit for the drive through restaurant.

Ex-convict on federal probation for 'ice' admits using drug

A man on federal probation after serving an 18-month prison term for involvement in a conspiracy to sell methamphetamine or "ice" tested presumptive positive for drug use last month, according to court documents.

U.S. Probation Officer Gregory F. Arriola informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI yesterday that Jordan Mendiola Reyes tested presumptive positive for use of "ice" while submitting to a random drug test last Nov. 13.

Arriola said that when confronted with the results, Reyes admitted in writing that he used the drug on Nov. 12.

Arriola said Reyes reported to the U.S. Probation Office as instructed for a probation noncompliance meeting, and confirmed that he used "ice" last Nov. 12 due to personal issues.

The probation officer said Reyes was admonished for his behavior and given guidance on other ways to deal with his stress.

Arriola told Reyes that drug testing will increase to five tests per month.

Arriola recommended no court action, but stated that Reyes will be closely monitored.

In May 2013, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramon V. Manglona sentenced Reyes to 18 months in prison and a three-year supervised release.

A federal grand jury indicted Reyes in August 2012 with one count of conspiracy to distribute "ice" and two counts of distribution of "ice."

After the indictment was filed, authorities arrested Reyes in Tacoma, Washington and then brought him to Saipan.

In February 2013, Reyes signed a plea deal and pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute "ice." ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Salvation Army reminds people of its Christmas toy drive

The Salvation Army is conducting its annual Christmas Toy Drive for underprivileged children. We seek donations of unwrapped toys for children of all ages, from infants through 18 years of age.

Our partners, Bank of Hawaii and Mobil, are hosting drop off locations for donations.

Bank of Hawaii has Angel Trees at both branches and donated toys may simply be placed at the boxes near the trees.

Mobil is hosting drop off boxes at 4 locations: Middle Road, Susupe, Garapan, and Kagman.

We are asking that all donations be made by Dec. 20, 2014.

We invite churches, schools and interested groups to contact us for information on how to conduct toy drives.

For more information, call Wayne Gillespie at 483-0885. ***(PR)***

UOG Biology students present work at national conference

University of Guam Biology students Ginger Naburn and Megan Volsteadt recently presented their scientific work at the 2014 Society for Advancement of Hispanics/Chicanos and Native Americans in Science National Conference, which was held from Oct. 16 to 18 in Los Angeles, CA.

Naburn

Volsteadt

Naburn presented her research about *Polybia*, a genus of wasps. She studied the relationship wasps have with members of their own colonies, versus members of other colonies. She found that wasps recognize members of their colony and let them to return to the nest without issue. The wasps also recognize when other wasps are not part of the colony and will force non-colony members out of the nest. Naburn will be graduating in December 2015 and is interested in pursuing medical school for ophthalmology.

Volsteadt presented her research about the Costa Rican herb *Cuphea racemosa*. Two bee species land on the flower of the herb, and one of those species steals nectar from the plant. Volstead measured seed production, population, pollen grains and overall plant reproduction to determine what effect the stolen nectar has on reproduction. She found there was no significant difference in reproduction for plants that had their nectar stolen by bees. Volsteadt is set to graduate in May 2015 and plans to pursue a career in entomology.

Both students conducted their research as part of the eight-week Native American and Pacific Islander Research Experience Program in Costa Rica held this past summer.

"Presenting my work at a national conference was a great experience," Volsteadt said. "I got to meet a lot of individuals working in the field of science and learn about some of the other types of research out there. It was also a great chance to explain my project and help others understand a relatively unknown herb species."

For more information about the UOG Biology program or NAPIRE, email Dr. Miller at rmiller@uguam.uog.edu. ***(UOG)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB15-COTA/FTA-024

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 29, 2014
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF FOUR (4) 2013 OR NEWER MOBILITY EQUIPPED VANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OFFICE TRANSIT AUTHORITY"

THE SPECIFICATION FOR THIS PROJECT WIL BE AVAILABLE ON OR AFTER **DECEMBER 02, 2014** AT COTA, OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, 2ND FLOOR, NMI RETIREMENT FUND BUILDING, ISA DRIVE, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT, BIDDERS ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH FTA FEDERAL CONTRACT CLAUSES AS APPLICABLE..

THE GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL PROPOSALS AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN ANY PROPOSAL IF IN ITS OPINION TO DO SO, WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE GOVERNMENT. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ THOMAS J. CAMACHO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

Commonwealth Casino Commission

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act, Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofschneider through the Commonwealth Casino Commission hereby gives notice that the Commission will reconvene its recessed meeting on December 5, 2014 on Friday, December 19, 2014 at 10:00 am at the Governor's Office Conference Room in Capitol Hill, Saipan. The following agenda will be discussed:

I. PRELIMINARIES
  a. Call to Order
  b. Roll Call
  c. Adoption of Agenda
  d. Adoption of Minutes-November 24, 2014
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. OLD BUSINESS
  a. Funding Issues
    1. Report from Secretary of Finance
    2. Selection of Banking Institution
    3. Authorized Signatories
    4. Staff needs for hire
      A. Review and adoption of Executive Director position description
      B. Review and adoption of Secretary/ Admin Assistant position description
  b. Office facility, furnishings/fixtures, equipment & supply needs
  c. Commissioner's Training
IV. NEW BUSINESS
  a. Bylaws
  b. Rules & Regulations
  c. Adoption of CNMI Procurement Regulations
  d. Adoption of CNMI Excepted Service Personnel Regulations
V. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VI. MISCELLANEOUS
VII. ADJOURNMENT

/s/ Juan M. Sablan
Chairman

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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PUBLIC NOTICE
AMENDMENT #02

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman of the Board, is hereby giving notice that the recessed Special Meeting of the Board on Thursday, October 2, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. will resume on **Wednesday, December 17, 2014** at **10:00 a.m. at the NMHC's Conference Room, Garapan, Saipan**. The public is welcome to submit written or oral comments regarding the agenda below. Individuals interested in attending the meeting and needing special accommodations are requested to contact NMHC in advance.

I. PRELIMARY MATTERS
  a. Call to Order
  b. Roll Call
  c. Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. NEW BUSINESS

IV. OLD BUSINESS
  a. Mortgage Credit Division
    i. HOME Policies and Procedures

V. LEGAL COUNSEL'S PENDING/ONGOING REPORT

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VII. OTHER MATTERS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a) (7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session.)

/s/**MARCIE M. TOMOKANE**
Chairwoman of the Board

40 qualify for CNMI State Math Court competition

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Thirty-six middle school students from Saipan and four from Tinian have qualified for the CNMI State Math Court competition, according to administrator Reo Arriola. These students were the top-scoring students from the islandwide competition held last Saturday.

According to Arriola, the state competition is slated for Jan. 17, 2015. Tinian students have been invited for this event as well, he said, and a venue is to be announced later.

On Saipan, sixth grade qualifying students were Annie Wang, Frederic Guintu, Mark Nam, Mubei Wang, Seung Ju Lee, and Victoria Santos.

On Saipan, seventh grade qualifying students were Allan Lee, Bernadette Jacinto, David Cai, Glen Matalog, Hyunin Noh, James Reyes, Jonah Chen, Leo Li, Lian Liang Li, Lucy Gu, Moses Qui, Seongbeom Song, Tae Yong Kim, Tian Microl Chen, and Zi Han Wang.

On Saipan, eigth grade qualifying students were Alex Park, Dai Podziewski, Ellen Lee, Eric Kiser, Grace Choi, Ian Cataluna, Jun Hee Lee, Karen Xu, Linda Shi, Michael Lee, Min Hyeok Ha, Ruth Park, Su Hwan Bae, Tania Tan, and Won Kwan Kim.

On Tinian, sixth grade qualifiers were Clarence Rodriguez, Jeremiah Hofschneider, and Tasi Long. Michael Pan was the seventh grade qualifier.

TheCNMI Math Court's next meet is this Saturday at Koblerville Elementary School, according to Arriola, where both the regular meet for grades 4 to 5 and the regional meet for grades 9-12 will happen concurrently. The same competition will happen on Tinian as well.

PDM Promoters collect 1140 lbs of trash

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Awaodori Team and PDM Promoters cleaned up the Garapan tourist district last Saturday, collecting 1,140 lbs of trash this time.

Last month, PDM Promoters collected 820 lbs of garbage.

A total of 29 members of the Saipan Awaodori Team and 11 Kinpachi Restaurant staff cleaned up Coral Tree Avenue, the American Memorial Park road, Beach Road and within the PDM walkway, in preparation for that evening's Christmas in the Marianas event.

PDM Promoter Inc. coordinator Sonia Siwa said that two Kagman High School students and one Northern Marianas College student joined them for this month cleanup.

For this year, PDM Promoters has collected over 11,000 lbs of trash, a record-setting feat by the organization and its members. From January to July about 6,000 lbs of trash were collected. From August to December over 5,000 lbs of trash were collected.

"This is our last scheduled cleanup for 2014. PDM Promoters Inc. accomplished the cleanup every month this year and we will continue to do it next year," Siwa said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The Paseo De Marianas Promoters consisting of the Kinpachi Restaurant staff and the Saipan Awaodori team did their monthly cleanup on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014, to prepare for that evening's event, Christmas in the Marianas.

Saipan Veterans Clinic encourages NMI vets to reach out to them

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan Veterans Clinic administrator Ruth Coleman is urging all veterans in the CNMI to enroll in the clinic's services and learn more of their benefits under the U.S Department of Veterans Affairs.

"I would love to have our veterans come in so we could enroll them. A lot of them don't know that they do have benefits, but we can only tell them about it and do what we can to help them," Coleman said.

Last year alone, Coleman said, about 646 veterans, including returning appointments], were provided services. This year, a total of about 300 veterans have so far been served by the clinic but she estimates there are actually about 1,500 veterans in the CNMI alone.

Coleman said the services they provide to veterans are primary care and mental health services.

"For primary care services, our clinic is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the veterans are seen by Dr. Norma Ada. She is the only VA doctor on the island," she said.

"We also do mental health services via video conferencing once a week—usually Tuesdays— and is seen by Dr. Ruby Manalastas, a psychiatrist from Guam," she added.

The Saipan Veterans Clinic also does video conferencing for therapy every Tuesdays and Wednesdays from different psychologists from Honolulu, Hawaii.

Coleman said that Fridays are when veterans go through the issues they are having. She noted that this also happens on Thursdays. Tramautic brain injury cognitive rehabilitation is also done on Fridays.

"Every quarter we have visiting neurologists meeting with the veterans for TBI and he does testing so they could recommend the veteran if care is needed. The primary care providers then work hand in hand with the neurologist where the doctors helps the veterans if the neurologists comes up with a diagnosis," she said.

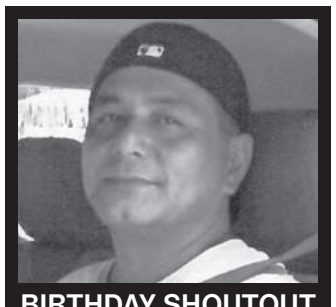
Coleman said the clinic also has a prosthetics chief and technician on a regular basis to see veterans with amputations and provide the prosthetics when they are seen.

"Although we are only seeing about 300 veterans, we are looking to expand more clinics as the video conferencing needs rose up so if they need help after the video conferencing they could then meet face to face," she said.

"We are urging all veterans in the CNMI to come to our office so we could enroll them and they could see that they do have benefits and that we are here for them," she added.

The clinic is located in Puerto Rico, at the MH II building near Bank of Hawaii.

For those wanting more information on the Saipan Veterans Clinic, contact Coleman at 322-0035.



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy 45th birthday to "John Mang"! We hope you enjoy your day and congratulations as you transition to retirement life. We love you! Greetings come from John Luis, Johnovan, Jennifer, Andrew and Lee.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-15-008

8" ACP WATERLINE ABANDONMENT FOR SAN VICENTE SERVICE AREA EXTENSION PROJECT, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the 8" ACP Waterline Abandonment for San Vicente Service Area Extension Project, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. This work consists of disconnecting customer service lateral connections off the 8" ACP and reconnecting these customers on to the proper tank service area distribution main. Work will also consist of installing new gate valve assemblies and the abandonment of the 8" ACP waterline. Payment is only for the items completely installed and accepted by CUC. The duration of the contract is 190 calendar days from date of award of the contract.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a site visit is scheduled on **December 31, 2014 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan.

One (1) original and Seven (7) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked *"8" ACP Waterline Abandonment for San Vicente Service Area Extension Project, Saipan"* to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 20, 2015**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. *A Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. All responses to this Invitation for Bids should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the bidder, awarded a contract.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 2, 2015** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., Purchasing Officer, Procurement & Supply Division via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Yvonne Cabrera, Engineer, Water & Wastewater Division via email yvonne.cabrera@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

ALAN W. FLETCHER
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Montenejo wins UFO's 2014 'That's My Boy'

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Jeroen Montenejo was named the inaugural winner of the United Filipino Organizations' 2014 That's My Boy contest, while Kristan Isip bagged the first-runner up title during a night of talent, formality, and cheers on Saturday at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

» Montenejo also bags three other special awards

Montenejo also walked off with Star of the Night, Best in Talent, and Best in Formal Wear awards.

Montenejo, who is also a dancer, was obviously the crowd favorite as loud cheers echoed throughout the venue when his name was called as the 2014 That's My Boy winner.

"I am very happy to win. It took me almost a month to prepare and I am happy that my brother taught me my dance moves for the talent show. I am also happy to join this competition and I feel good," Montenejo said minutes after being named winner.

His parents, Jojie and Emma Montenejo, were excited and happy with their son's victory.

"It took about three weeks preparation and this was all through our family's hard work and support," both parents said.

UFO event director Ernie Molina, who prepared the young tots for the competition, also congratulated Jeroen's workmanship and preparation.

"He really deserves the grand prize because even during the rehearsal he was really consistent in everything and he has the qualities of 'That's My Boy' because among the candidates, he was the best contender and competitor among the rest. We would always say that Jeroen would win the most awards among the candidates. Another reason is that he is already used to dancing and used to entertaining people, that is why he has that confidence," Molina said.

Molina said the other candidates also deserve their awards.

Others who made it to the top 5 were second runner up Irie Kane Camacho, third runner up Jian Carlo Marquez, and fourth runner up Deejay Santomin.

Those who received special awards include Donato Santiago [friendship], Lyndon Digno [photogenic and best smile], Bryan Bravo [personality], Jan Dumagan [Docomo Pacific Spirit award], John Moises Justo [charity], and Dave Bryan Odicta [leadership award].

Molina said that although not everyone got a special award, all candidates received certificates and prizes for their participation.

UFO president Annamae Adaza said she is just happy to have hosted their final event for this year and she is grateful that the event was successful for the last term of her presidency.

Sponsors for the event include Docomo Pacific, LBC Mabuhay, TSL Foundation, Eli Arago, PCG Guam, Traders Insurance, Ahbu Auto Care Center, Joe & Evelyn Itibus, Dr. Esther Kaynajorn, Gemma Batusin, Guadalupe Sabino, Atoy Banting, Barny's Pizza, Peter Crisostomo, Herman's Modern Baker, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Joeten Enterprises, Beauty Zoned Care, Shenanigans Restaurant, Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, National Office Supply, IBSS, Saipan World Resort, Dolphin Wholesale, Western Union, McDonald's Saipan, Mango Resort, Kautz Glass, Nelma Sadian, Arceli Legaspi, Boy Lingcaso, Sandy Palon of Reliance Construction, Freddie Cataluna of Five Star Builders, Jet Holding Company, Blossoms Floral Depot, AON Insurance, Horizons Inc., Pacific Islands Club, Pacific Trading Company, Natasha Service Center, Blue, Hawaiian Spa, Tropics Vacation & Travel, Tropics Realty, Alpex Saipan Inc., Laolao Bay Golf and Resort, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Socorro Huliganga and family, Kanoa Resort, Taro Sue Store, Coca-Cola, Triple J Motors, Mariana Resort & Spa, KWAW, Saipan TV Production, Island Touch by Philip, New Paradise Florist, Pacific Quick Print, *Beach Road* Magazine, Saipan Music & Dance Studio, Uncle Ben's Studios' Educational Services, Keynotes School of Music, *Marianas Variety, Saipan Tribune*, Joanne of Trends Beauty Salon, Boyet Centino and Don Pedro Restaurant.

"It was indeed an honor for me to be of service to our *kababayans* [compatriots]. We know we cannot please everybody but as long as the majority are happy with our community services, then that's the most important. Thank you to all who supported us all the way and please continue your support for the organization," Adaza said.

PHOTOS BY JAYSON CAMACHO

Jeroen Montenejo, center, is 2014 That's My Boy winner.

Kristan Razon Isip is first runner up for the 2014 That's My Boy contest.

Jeroen Montenejo bags Best in Talent, Best in Formal Wear, and Star of the Night awards.

Irie Kane Camacho is second runner up in the 2014 That's My Boy contest.

Deejay Santomin is fourth runner up in the 2014 That's My Boy contest.

The 16 tots featured in "That's My Boy" join the United Filipino Organization members for a group photo.

Jian Carlo Marquez is third runner up in the 2014 That's My Boy contest.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-044

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Fiscal Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or designee. May supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Receives and processes customer payments; screens and verifies check receipts; updates customer accounts; reviews customer account status for partial payment receipts; computes payment information; and issues payment slips. May provide field utility meter inspection, testing, investigation, repairs and service documentation. Enters and verifies account changes and correction transactions; researches, reconciles and compiles adjustment documentation; prepares billing adjustments; and/or documents customer account status. Balances cash and other payment receipts and prepares bank deposits; balances credit card receipts with merchant settlement records; prepares sales deposits; processes customer refund payments; may process and file payroll documents. Receives and responds to customer calls and inquiries; reviews account and payment information; explains customer billing regarding charge disputes; assists customers with new accounts, required documentation and application processing; processes work orders as required; and refers inquiries to appropriate resource. Organizes and files revenue receipts, change vouchers, and related reports; maintains filing system; and prepares listings, schedules and activity reports. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: F.A.M. /C.F.O., **Saipan**, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $20,826.00 per annum to $28,115.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): Three (3)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma and 4 years of utility accounts or fiscal support experience. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage and testing (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching, reconciling and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants will be tested and are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

Drop off your CUC Employment Application at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Otherwise, you may drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration Office.

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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-048

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Engineering Technician

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Division manager or designee. Provides technical support and assistance related to project management, safety, quality control and assurance; performs field investigations and inspections; performs field or easement verifications; monitors equipment and materials used; ensures adherence with plans, specifications and contractual compliance; and submits deficiencies for review and correction. Gathers data through observation and by reviewing relevant resources such as construction plans, blue prints, specifications, maps, technical drawings, property records, and/or GPS data. Enters, updates and verifies data in systems; prepares and maintains reports, notices, drawings, graphs, charts, correspondence, cost estimates and related engineering documents in accordance with standards. Plans and prioritizes schedule and routes for field inspections; researches existing project sites and explores potential construction sites; monitors rights of way and easements. Monitors and reviews equipment and supplies inventory; provides notification of resource or maintenance needs. Provides support and assistance with special engineering studies. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $20,826.00 per annum to $28,115.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: High School Diploma and 2 years of journey level experience in drafting, office and field engineering, or surveying support work. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Basic engineering and construction terminology, methods, practices, and techniques; Surveying methods and techniques; Mathematical concepts; Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Reading and interpreting plans, specifications, maps and related technical documentation; Performing engineering surveys, mapping and locating; Performing inspections and identifying issues in assigned area of responsibility; Operating and maintaining equipment in assigned area of responsibility; Performing mathematical calculations and estimating resources and costs; Researching, troubleshooting and problem solving; Preparing technical reports, maps and related documents used in assigned area of responsibility; Applying safe work practices; Planning and prioritizing activities and routes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-045

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Fiscal Technician, Senior

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Chief Financial Officer or designee. May provide lead direction and/or supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Receives, reviews and verifies vendor invoices and statements; service reports; time sheets; payroll information; and/or other payable documentation; ensures completeness and accuracy of calculations and information. Determines general ledger account information or expense allocation information; processes accounts payable or payroll transactions; routes check payment or wire transfer information for approval; posts accounts upon approval. Researches and reviews account, billing or system information; prepares reconciliations of financial data; updates and maintains account or employee data; calculates and prepares financial adjustments or account charge information. Assists internal and external customers with inquiries or account information; receives complaints; researches issues; provides information and explains processes and procedures; recommends resolutions to issues. Retrieves, files and maintains records, documents and tracking spreadsheets; processes purchase orders; prepares reports, work orders and/or audit confirmations; compiles documents and drafts correspondence. May provide testimony related to customer account disputes. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: F.A.M. /C.F.O., **Saipan**, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $22.865.00 per annum to $30,867.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Associate's Degree in Accounting or directly related field and 3 years of fiscal support experience; OR High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program, AS Diploma and 6 years of direct fiscal support experience. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Research methods; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, reviewing, posting and reconciling fiscal data or account information; Verifying fiscal data and updating account information; Responding to inquiries, researching information and resolving issues; Performing mathematical calculations and making corrections and adjustments; Researching and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, correspondence, reports and records; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Organizing and maintaining records management systems; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Applicants will be tested and are subject to pre-employment drug testing.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 14-049

Opening Date: December 15, 2014
Closing Date: December 29, 2014

Engineer, Senior (Electrical, PE)

Duties: Under the direct supervision of the Power Division manager or designee. As assigned, supervises staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations. Manages complex water, wastewater, or electrical projects and executing programs and elements of the stipulated order as required by EPA; coordinates and meets with other divisional sections and corporate divisions to coordinate activities and projects. Performs project management activities to include: preparing reports, correspondence and recommendations; developing scope of work; providing technical reviews; surveying for projects; scheduling project elements; evaluating proposals; monitoring project progress and funding; and, recommending project selection. Prepares engineering calculations, plans and specifications; designs water, wastewater or other utility related facilities; collects data and performs project research related to project and operational costs, and efficiency analysis. Manages construction and performs contract management work; evaluates bid documents; maintains correspondence with contractors; reviews submittals; interprets drawings and technical specifications; and evaluates work for compliance with contract provisions. Performs construction inspections; reviews and processes payment requests from contractors. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

LOCATION: Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA.
SALARY: $48,821.00 per annum to $82,995.00 per annum.
CONTRACT: Not Contracted.
POSITION(S): One (1)

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, 5 years professional engineering experience and at least two years' experience supervising and engineering section. Licensed in a U.S. jurisdiction as an Electrical Engineer. Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Engineering and construction principles, methods, practices, and techniques; Engineering planning, specification, and drawing methods and techniques; Mathematical concepts; Applicable equipment, controls and systems of assigned area of responsibility; Safety principles and practices; Data collection techniques; Research methods; Project management principles; Contract administration principles; Customer service principles; Quality assurance principles; Modern office technology. Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Managing complex projects and construction activities; Developing project scope and plan; Monitoring project schedules, status and compliance; Preparing plan designs, calculations, technical specifications, and other technical documentation; Planning and designing utility facilities; Performing technical review of submittals; Interpreting drawings and technical specifications; Monitoring project funding and expenditures; Maintaining project files and records; Performing research and efficiency studies; Responding to technical inquiries and information requests; Identifying, troubleshooting and investigating issues; Recommending, developing and implementing solutions; Conducting inspections; Collecting, analyzing and researching field data; Administering and monitoring contract compliance; Assisting with bid administration processes; Applying safe work practices; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Affordable Care Act is helping control health-care spending increases

As Republicans in Congress gear up in January for their most aggressive attack yet on President Barack Obama's health-care reforms, here's something they probably won't mention: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced last week that U.S. health-care spending grew just 3.6 percent in 2013.

That's the slowest growth rate on record since 1960 and the fifth straight year of low health-spending growth. It's also less than half the average annual increase during President George W. Bush's eight years in office.

The Affordable Care Act isn't the whole reason. Continued recovery from the recession helps. But the drop in health insurance premium growth from 4 percent in 2012 to 2.8 percent last year indicates the president's reforms are working as planned.

That's just one measure of success. Here's another: The number of uninsured Americans has dropped from 21 percent to 13 percent of the population in just the past year. And that's before the upcoming enrollment period, when more citizens are expected to join the insured. In California alone, 3.4 million people who didn't have health insurance before sign-ups last fall are now covered.

As to the charge that if the ACA went into effect, it would stifle medical innovation in the United States: The pharmaceutical industry announced there were more drug launches in 2013 than in any of the past 10 years.

These facts are extremely important since Democrats lost control of the Senate. With Republicans in charge of both houses of Congress, the GOP is expected to be even bolder in fighting the president's chief domestic legacy regardless of its successes.

Sen. Mitch McConnell is expected to lead the charge to end the individual mandate, which Obama reluctantly accepted to help make the financing work. Republicans also want to end the requirement that employers with more than 50 full-time workers offer some form of health-care insurance or pay a fine. If nothing else, the GOP wants to force the president into a veto of two of the least popular aspects of the Affordable Care Act.

Obama and his supporters have been inexplicably shy about promoting the Affordable Care Act's accomplishments. If he had made a campaign pledge to cut the rate of increase of the nation's health-care spending in half while at the same time bringing insurance to millions of uninsured Americans, would anyone have believed him? Yet it's true. Talk it up.

(c)2014 *San Jose Mercury News* (San Jose, Calif.)

Is America still exceptional?

By JOEL MATHIS AND BEN BOYCHUK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

It is expected of every major politician that he or she affirm "American exceptionalism"--the idea that this country not only occupies an extraordinary place in the world and in history, but that the country and its people are exceptionally good. This week's release of a report detailing torture of terror suspects carried out under the Bush Administration, however, has renewed old divisions and for some has called into question America's moral standing.

Is "American exceptionalism" fact or fiction? What should we make of the torture report? Joel Mathis and Ben Boychuk debate the matter.

JOEL MATHIS

Let's be charitable instead of divisive for a moment.

After 9/11, Americans were so scared and frenzied that it is completely understandable that some of those in charge of protecting us would resort to extreme methods. Dick Cheney went on "Meet the Press" the weekend after the attack and told us that the government would have to work on the "dark side." Most listeners had an inkling of what that meant at the time, and approved. So most of us who were citizens at the time of the attack probably have a little bit of the torture report's blood on our hands.

Furthermore, this is not a Republican or Democratic issue. Yes, Republicans initiated the torture described in this week's report. But there's evidence that key Democratic members of Congress were presented evidence of the torture while it was still policy, and acquiesced. So there are very few people in the political class with clean hands.

Yet an evil thing done in a panicked frenzy is still an evil thing. We became that which we had for so long condemned. The techniques we used? Picked up from Chinese communists, who used them expressly to force false confessions from prisoners. Torture was banned under both domestic law and international treaties--including one signed by Ronald Reagan--because we knew that torture was something done only by the "bad guys."

Finally, torture did not make us safer. Instead, when news emerged--at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere--it hardened hearts against America, and created more warriors willing to attack and give their lives in the fight against us. It was not a help.

If America is indeed exceptional--and, often, it has been and can be again--it is because it does exceptional things and behaves exceptionally, not because we have a hall pass from history or the behavior expected of civilized nations.

Are we exceptional? We will be if we let the torture report chasten us into better behavior.

BEN BOYCHUK

Remember what America looked and felt like after 9/11. Nobody knew if or when another attack would come. For a fleeting moment, the vast majority of Americans united in the cause of crushing our enemies. We wanted Osama bin Laden's head on a pike. Above all, we wanted to go back to living our lives as we had before that day--by any means necessary.

The Senate Intelligence Committee's report comes at a moment when America is a deeply divided country. Democrats led by departing committee chairwoman, Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, have used the report to cudgel the CIA and the Bush Administration. Senate Republicans wanted no part of it.

Feinstein for her part knew what the CIA was up to. In 2002, she said the 9/11 attacks meant the United States would "have to do some things that historically we have not wanted to do to protect ourselves." Only after the gory details made the front page of the New York Times did Feinstein seem to find a conscience.

Defenders of "enhanced interrogation" insist the program yielded "actionable intelligence." Osama bin Laden is dead. Plenty of terrorists are dead, too.

Were they the right terrorists? Who knows? There seems to be no shortage of fanatics running riot in the Middle East and South Asia. And the countries we believed had been liberated are neither free nor peaceful nor especially friendly to us.

President Obama last year redefined the war on terror as "a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America." Whatever you want to call it, the war continues with no end in sight. And how could there be an end when Congress and President Obama (or his predecessor for that matter) have never defined what victory would look like?

Was it worth it? Not if the United States remains in a perpetual state of "persistent, targeted efforts."

For all of that, however, Americans remain an exceptional, conscientious and freedom-loving people. We deserve better than the fools and hypocrites who presume to govern us.

Ben Boychuk (bboychuk@city-journal.org) is associate editor of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal. *Joel Mathis (joelmmathis@gmail.com) is associate editor for* Philadelphia Magazine. *Visit them on Facebook: www.facebook.com/benandjoel.*

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Torture occurred, and we must own up to our actions

By DIANNE FEINSTEIN
Tribune News Service

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) chairs the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. She wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

There has been a suggestion in recent days that now is not a good time to release a review prepared by the Senate Intelligence Committee of the CIA's detention and interrogation program. But is there ever a good time to admit our country tortured people?

In the wake of 9/11, we were desperate to bring those responsible for the brutal attacks to justice. But even that urgency did not justify torture. The United States must be held to a higher standard than our enemies, yet some of our actions did not clear that bar. It is time to publicly examine how that happened.

The administration has known for months that this document would become public and has been making every effort to safeguard U.S. personnel and interests abroad. But the bottom line is, torture occurred, and we must own up to our actions and move forward.

In the spring of 2009, the Senate Intelligence Committee voted 14-1 to begin a review of the CIA's detention and interrogation program. The goal was to learn exactly what happened to more than 100 individuals secretly detained overseas after 9/11.

More than five years later, our committee's study is complete, and that is the report we released on Tuesday for public review.

Here, briefly, is what we found: After launching a program to detain and interrogate suspected terrorists using coercive techniques--tactics that at times amounted to torture--CIA personnel provided extensive inaccurate information about the program to the White House, the Justice Department, Congress and the American public.

Contrary to CIA claims at the time, these so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" did not produce intelligence that thwarted terrorist plots or resulted in the capture of terrorists. That intelligence was already available from other sources or from the detainees themselves before they were tortured. In fact, torture often led to false information.

The earliest case involving CIA interrogation after 9/11 was that of Abu Zubaydah, who ran terrorist training camps and was associated with some of Al Qaeda's top leaders before he was captured in March 2002.

Instead of employing tried and true methods to interrogate him--such as using the military's authority to hold and question terrorism suspects, partnering with allied governments or using the criminal justice system--the CIA improvised. It hurriedly arranged overseas black sites to detain individuals and attempt to collect intelligence from them.

During Abu Zubaydah's first months of captivity, FBI and CIA interrogators were able to extract important information from him through traditional interrogation methods. But later, the CIA acted on the advice of unqualified contractors and began using coercive interrogation techniques in an effort to obtain information that Abu Zubaydah never had.

The CIA adopted these interrogation techniques without informing the congressional oversight committees or key members of the George W. Bush administration. There was essentially no oversight.

After more than two weeks of near-constant coercive interrogations, including painful stress positions and repeated waterboarding, Abu Zubaydah had provided none of the lifesaving information the CIA claimed he possessed.

The interrogations continued, even after on-site interrogators concluded that it was highly unlikely he knew such information.

Abu Zubaydah was just the first of many detainees. In total, at least 119 individuals were held overseas as part of the CIA's detention and interrogation program.

In the end, Intelligence Committee investigators examined more than 6 million pages of CIA records. The 500-page executive summary we released is based on our 6,700-page study, which includes 38,000 footnotes.

The study's 20 findings and conclusions can be grouped into four key areas, each supported by extensive factual records.

First, the use of coercive interrogation techniques did not lead to intelligence that wasn't available through traditional interrogation or that was necessary to stop terrorist attacks and capture terrorists--the arguments the CIA used to justify the use of the techniques.

Although the CIA repeatedly claimed that enhanced interrogations enabled it to capture terrorists and thwart terrorist plots, the study concludes that any counterterrorism successes were the result of traditional intelligence and law enforcement efforts, not the CIA torture program.

Second, CIA personnel routinely provided inaccurate information to the CIA inspector general, the White House, the Justice Department and Congress about the interrogation techniques being used and the results they were producing.

These inaccurate claims kept those responsible for evaluating and overseeing the program from doing so. Our system of checks and balances requires policymakers to have accurate information about government actions. Unfortunately, the CIA withheld crucial facts.

Third, despite the unprecedented authority the CIA was granted by the Bush administration to detain terrorist suspects, the agency failed to effectively manage and oversee its own program. This was especially true in the program's early years, when more than half of all CIA detainees were taken into custody.

CIA headquarters failed to provide effective guidance or legal advice on who could be detained and how they had to be treated. Almost a quarter of detainees failed to meet the legal standard for detention provided by the Bush administration.

The manner in which coercive interrogation techniques were implemented often differed sharply from Justice Department guidelines, and in some cases other interrogation techniques were used without any approval at all. The study found that inexperienced personnel were allowed to play key roles at black sites, including some individuals with significant red flags in their backgrounds.

Contractors initially developed and operated the program and later ran almost all aspects of it.

And finally, the detention and interrogation of CIA detainees was far more brutal than has been previously described, not just to the public but to Congress, the White House and the Department of Justice.

Interrogation techniques were often used in combination and relentlessly, often for days at a time. One otherwise healthy detainee died in CIA custody, and at least one more came close.

Torture goes against the very soul of our country. We are a democracy, established on the rule of law.

We're not perfect and there are some dark patches in our past, but what makes us special is that we recognize these evils, we come to grips with them and we fix them.

President Obama took important steps by prohibiting secret CIA detention and torture in his first days in office, and he has declassified important details about this program.

This report is the next step toward enacting major reforms to ensure something like this never happens again.

Grim testament to Islamic State's ethnic cleansing

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.*

In August, President Obama authorized air strikes to prevent the Islamic State from carrying out a genocidal slaughter of Iraq's Yazidi minority, tens of thousands of whom had fled their besieged city and villages into barren mountains.

The Yazidi struggle continues. The Islamic State is selling off 2,000 captured women and girls as sex slaves. Six thousand Yazidis remain trapped on Mount Sinjar. Hundreds of thousands more--virtually the entire community--have been driven from their homes and are struggling to survive in refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan.

I just spent a day with Vian Dakhil, the only Yazidi member of the Iraqi parliament, whose passionate plea for help on Aug. 5 made her the face of the Yazidi struggle. (Watch the YouTube clip of her speech and you will be moved to tears.) She is in the United States at the invitation of Temple University's Dialogue Institute, and is now in Washington to ask the administration and Congress for urgent assistance.

The Islamic State attempted genocide against the Yazidi minority--a pre-Islamic, monotheistic faith--lays bare the vicious ideology that seeks to drag the region back to the seventh century and illustrates the need to destroy the group. So Dakhil's message deserves to be heard.

She is an accomplished, striking woman who taught biology at a university in Erbil, Kurdistan, before entering politics, and travels around Washington in a black pantsuit, her long, blond hair flying. She comes from a family of strong women (four of her sisters are doctors and one is a pharmacist) and displayed her own courage when she rushed in August to help refugees on Mount Sinjar, flying in with a rare Iraqi government helicopter rescue mission. The chopper crashed, leaving her with broken legs that are only now healing; she is still using one crutch.

"We are being killed for our religious convictions," Dakhil told me with passion. Indeed, the Islamic State targets members of her religious sect (who are mostly ethnic Kurds), which draws on Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism, because they are considered infidels.

The jihadis are targeting other Muslim sects, as well as Christians, who have fled by the tens of thousands, but their women haven't been taken as chattel. "ISIS looks for young Yazidi girls to rape, 11 to 13 years old, and does it over and over," she related emotionally. Some of the captives have been able to call home on cellphones and describe the horrors they have endured or witnessed. The three daughters of one of her cousins were taken and are still missing; the cousin was murdered.

When she lists the steps that are needed immediately to help the Yazidis, it's not surprising that Dakhil starts with a request for international help in freeing the women who have been enslaved.

She has little faith that the central Iraqi government or its security forces can help rescue Yazidis in the future, nor does she have any confidence in Iraq's neighbors to do so. Instead, she hopes the United States will directly arm and assist Kurdish peshmerga forces, which include Yazidis.

Dakhil is also concerned about the fate of around 260 women and girls who have escaped from the Islamic State. Yazidi religious leaders have instructed families to welcome them back, but "because of cultural norms, these women will not be able to marry nor be able to lead normal lives." After enduring such horrors, they, and those rescued in the future, will need counseling and job training to resume any semblance of normality.

"Help us develop programs to support these victims of ISIS brutality," Dakhil urges. I can't think of a better use for U.S. aid funds.

Dakhil also hopes that Washington will aid the Kurds in evacuating 1,200 or so families that are still marooned on Mount Sinjar. And the several hundred thousand Yazidi refugees now living in tent cities in Kurdistan are suffering dire shortages of food, medicine, and sanitary facilities as a cold, wet winter approaches. Humanitarian aid funneled through the United Nations, or the central Kurdish government, is slow to appear, or invisible, she says. She is urging that such aid be delivered directly through the Kurdish regional government in Erbil. Good idea.

Of the many poignant and disturbing things I heard from Dakhil, the most striking was that she believes there is no possibility of religious minorities returning to their old homes among Sunni Muslims. Yazidis (and Christians) in Iraq's north all have stories about how their relatives were betrayed to the Islamic State by Sunni neighbors or worse.

"My uncle's Sunni neighbors killed him, even though Yazidis and Sunnis have lived for hundreds of years as brothers," she says. "Now everything has changed and I have no idea why." Yazidis believe they can no longer trust their former neighbors, and many Iraqi Christians believe the same.

So Dakhil says the only chance for minorities to remain inside Iraq is if they are allotted a separate, autonomous region in the north once the Islamic State is rolled back, an area that might be attached to the autonomous Kurdish region. This is an idea the central government opposes.

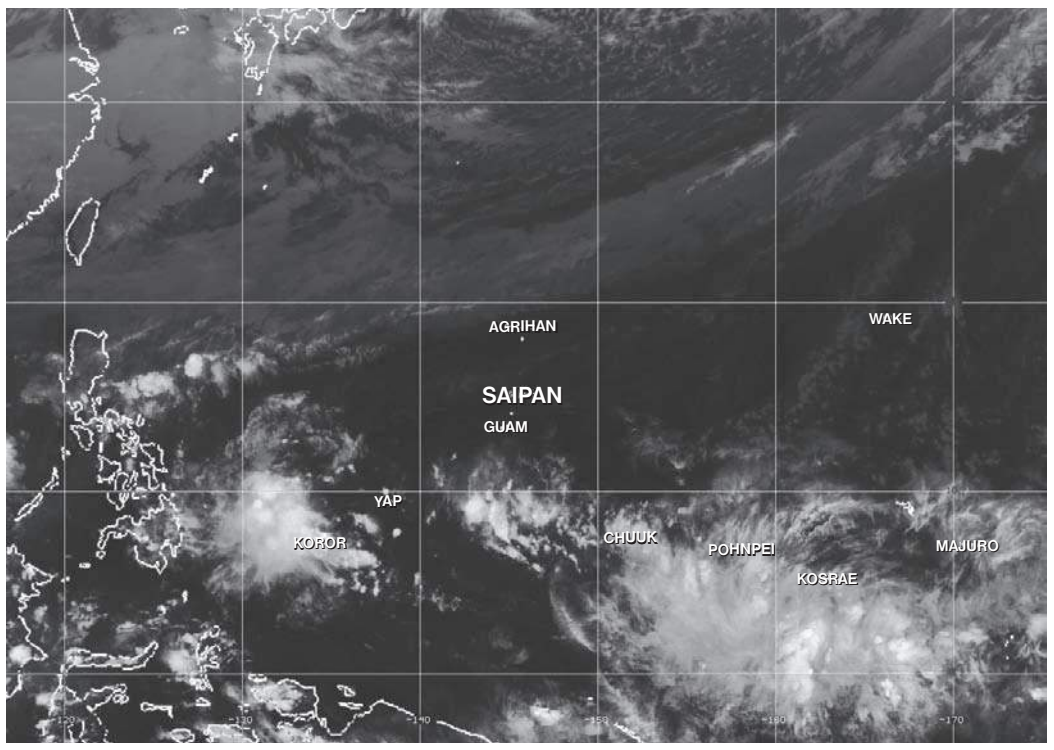
Her idea may be premature, but it deserves consideration at the White House and by Iraq's government. If Yazidi and Christian minorities are driven entirely out of the region, the Middle East's future will look even bleaker than it does now.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Breezy during the afternoon.
▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from 25N160E across the far northern CNMI near 20N145E to beyond 130E at 15N. Cloudiness and patchy showers exist along this feature and northward to 25N. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over Palau and west of Yap west of a line from 14N136E to 5N136E. Another similar area is seen northwest of Chuuk between 7N and 11N from 143E to 151E. A weak circulation is centered southwest of Kosrae near 2N161E. A surface trough curves east-northeastward from the circulation to near the date line at 8N179E.Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with this trough are present just south of Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro south of a line from 8N154E to 4N168E to 9N180E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼81
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼80
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲67	▼62
Beijing	Sunny	▲34	▼19
Hong Kong	Windy	▲65	▼49
Honolulu	Windy	▲79	▼71
London	Mostly Sunny	▲47	▼33
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲63	▼52
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼75
Melbourne	Windy	▲88	▼53
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲76	▼61
New York	Sunny	▲46	▼36
Osaka	Rain	▲48	▼35
Paris	Showers	▲44	▼41
Pusan	Windy	▲39	▼23
Rome	Rain	▲60	▼54
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼40
San Francisco	Rain	▲55	▼51
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲25	▼ 9
Tokyo	Rain	▲52	▼38
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲52	▼39

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:44 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.3 Feet
8:15 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
2:50 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
10:05 PM	Today	High Tide:	0.4 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:03 AM	1:14 PM
Wednesday	1:51 AM	1:55 PM
Thursday	2:41 AM	2:38 AM
Friday	3:34 AM	3:25 PM
Saturday	4:29 AM	4:16 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2014

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:20pm	7:05pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
7C 3401	4:30pm	8:20pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764A	1:30am	5:30am	4, 7
MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 5

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:30am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5069/PR111	2:45am	4:50pm	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	7:20am	2, 7 via GUM
UA5070/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:45pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/473	6:05am	9:50pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5071/PR111	6:40am	4:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5071/PR111	7:15am	4:50pm	1, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:50pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:50pm	Daily via ICN

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:10am	12:50pm	1 via ICN
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/723	2:40am	12:50pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	10:35pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	10:35pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via GUM
OZ604/749	3:20pm	10:30pm	Daily via ICN

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:10pm	2:40pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:10pm	1:45pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	3:00pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
7C 3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ605	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:30pm	5:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763A	4:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 6
MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	4, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:55pm	3:10am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA5041	7:35am	6:25pm	1,5 via GUM
PR110/UA5077	7:35am	8:05pm	3, 6, 7 via GUM
PR110/UA5043	7:35am	10:10pm	1, 5 via GUM
DL172/288	9:40am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 7 via GUM
UA190/5077	10:00am	8:05pm	3, 6 via GUM
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	4 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	2 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:59pm	2:40pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:59pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:59pm	8:05pm+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:59pm	10:10pm+1	5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN
OZ750/603	1:10am	2:20pm	Daiily via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/605	2:20pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	10:55pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
UA180/5071	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	2:40pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5041	10:55pm	6:25pm+1	1, 5 via GUM
UA180/5077	10:55pm	8:05pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA180/5043	10:55pm	10:10pm+1	1, 5 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Identity theft victims face months of hassle

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) -- As soon as Mark Kim found out his personal information was compromised in a data breach at Target last year, the 36-year-old tech worker signed up for the retailer's free credit monitoring offer so he would be notified if someone used his identity to commit fraud.

Someone did. The first monitoring report showed crooks opened accounts in his name at Macy's and Kohl's department stores, where they racked up more than $7,000 in charges. "My heart basically sank," he said. Over the next seven months the New York City resident spent hours on the phone, most of a day in a police station filing a report, and countless time sending documents to banks and credit reporting agencies to clear his credit history.

He's hardly alone. The Target hack during last year's Black Friday shopping weekend was just one in a wave of data breaches that have exposed more than 100 million customer records at U.S. retailers, banks and Internet companies. The latest high-profile hack, at Sony Pictures Entertainment, resulted in Social Security numbers and other personal details of nearly 50,000 current and former Sony employees and film actors being stolen and posted online for anyone to see. While cases are difficult to trace, analysts at Javelin Strategy & Research estimate that one in three Americans affected by a data breach ultimately became the victim of fraud last year - up from one in nine in 2010.

Although banks often absorb bogus charges, it's up to victims to clean up their credit histories and recover stolen funds. On top of lost time, money and emotional energy, victims face the frustration of rarely seeing anyone pay for the crimes. Identity theft cases are rarely prosecuted, said Avivah Litan, an analyst who studies fraud and identity theft for the research firm Gartner. Local police have limited resources, and criminals are often overseas, "so unless it's part of a bigger pattern, they're not going to spend much time pursuing it." Kim said a police detective who took his complaint later told him the accounts were opened by someone in California, but Kim never heard any more about the investigation.

In the past year, Target and other major retailers have said they're increasing security. President Obama has urged banks and stores to speed up adoption of "chip-and-pin" payment cards, which are harder to hack. But reports of data breaches continue. And as Federal Trade Commission member Terrell McSweeney said recently, "Disturbingly, the news has seemed to desensitize many people to the real risks created each time an event occurs."

AP

In this Dec. 2, 2014 file photo, identity theft victim Mark Kim poses for photos in front of a Target store, in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

Kim can't be certain Target was the source of the fraud he experienced, he acknowledged. Experts say crooks often steal or buy consumer information from more than one source, and use it to compile a complete dossier on potential victims. That's likely the way hackers last year impersonated the rich and famous to get credit reports on Paris Hilton, Michelle Obama and even General Keith Alexander, then-head of the National Security Agency.

Alexander told a public forum this fall that when he tried to file his taxes, he learned someone else had already claimed a $9,000 refund in his name. Fraudsters also used his identity to apply for about 20 credit cards. The FBI eventually caught a suspect, he said; the FBI declined comment.

Meticulous by nature, Kim documented every conversation with an investigator or company representative. He was fortunate, he added, that his employer let him use the phone and fax machine where he works. "If I worked at a stricter company, it would have been a nightmare," he said. But Kim was never reimbursed for sending affidavits and other documents by certified mail to various banks and agencies.

While identity theft is certainly a global problem, experts say it's difficult to measure worldwide losses. However, a Department of Justice study estimates identity theft of all kinds was responsible for U.S. financial losses of $24.7 billion in 2012 - nearly double the $14 billion lost from all other property crimes such as burglary and theft. According to Javelin surveys in the U.S., when an existing credit card is exposed and then used for fraud, the average loss is $1,251. When a social security number is exposed and then used to open new accounts, the average loss is $2,330.

Meddlesome co-workers

YOUR OFFICE COACH

By MARIE G. MCINTYRE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Marie G. McIntyre is a workplace coach and the author of Secrets to Winning at Office Politics. *Send in questions and get free coaching tips at http://www.yourofficecoach.com, or follow her on Twitter @officecoach.*

Q: After my recent promotion was announced to the staff, one of my co-workers became very upset. She complained to our manager, who immediately sent out a second announcement cancelling the promotion. When I confronted him about this, he apologized for "giving me something, then taking it back".

My boss justified his reversal by saying that the co-worker made some good points about my unsuitability for the position. He also said that she was feeling undervalued. Previously, this woman has convinced him to change decisions about vacation, work assignments, and various other matters.

I believe staffing decisions should be based on merit, not people's emotional reactions, so I would like to discuss this issue with human resources. However, I'm afraid the conversation might get back to my boss, because our company is very small. How do I ensure that I will be treated fairly in the future?

A: Your boss is obviously an idiot. His arbitrary retraction of your promotion clearly indicates that he lacks the ability to manage a lemonade stand, much less a business unit. And since someone above him undoubtedly had to approve this decision, that person is an idiot as well.

If your entire business operates like this, the only way to assure that you will be "treated fairly in the future" is to find a more professional place to work. Unfortunately, managers in small companies often receive little or no leadership training, so they never learn to do their jobs properly.

This particular move was so utterly preposterous, however, that anyone with an ounce of common sense would not have done it. So while I have no idea whether you were ready to be promoted, I can say with a high degree of certainty that your boss was not.

Q: Our manager, who is very old-fashioned, expects women to wear skirts and men to wear ties. She also has a strict policy that no one is allowed to eat at their desks. Everyone thinks these rules are ridiculous, so we generally ignore them on days when we know she will be out.

Recently, we were surprised to receive a scolding email from our boss saying these policy violations would no longer be tolerated. We eventually determined that a new co-worker had tattled on us. Although this guy seemed nice at first, he's obviously not a trustworthy person. What should we do about this?

A: The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. So if you have clear evidence that this new colleague acted as an intentional informant, you can probably assume that he will continue sharing his observations. And since your manager found the information useful, she will undoubtedly continue to listen.

Fortunately, however, identifying the tattler does put you in a better position to prevent further problems. Knowing that your actions will likely be reported, you must keep confidential information to yourself, avoid making negative comments about your boss, and follow the rules, whether you like them or not.

SIDEBAR

Your info has been hacked. Now what do you do?

SAN FRANCISCO (AP—Criminals stole personal information from tens of millions of Americans in data breaches this past year. Of those affected, one in three may become victims of identity theft, according to research firm Javelin. Whether shopping, banking or going to the hospital, Americans are mostly at the mercy of companies to keep their sensitive details safe. But there are steps you can take to protect yourself against the financial, legal and emotional impact of identity theft - and most of them are free:

AS A RULE:

■ Closely guard your social security numbers - and those of your children - as well as credit and debit card information and account passwords.

■ Shred unneeded financial records and credit offers.

DETECTIVE WORK:

■ Examine credit card bills for irregularities each month.

■ Get a free credit report once a year from at least one of the major reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion), and review it for unauthorized accounts. Ignore services that charge a fee for credit reports. You can order them without charge at www.annualcreditreport.com . If you order from each agency once a year, you could effectively check your history every four months.

DO PAID SERVICES WORK?

■ Some experts say there's not much to be gained from a paid credit monitoring service. But if a business sends you a notice of a data breach, it can't hurt to sign up for any monitoring they offer for free. These services will tell you if a new account is opened in your name, but they won't prevent it, and many don't check for things like bogus cellphone accounts or fraudulent applications for government benefits. Some do offer limited insurance or help from a staffer trained to work with credit issuers and reporting agencies.

SOMEONE STOLE MY IDENTITY, WHAT DO I DO?

■ The Federal Trade Commission recommends immediately notifying one of the credit agencies and requesting a 90-day credit alert. (Each reporting agency is supposed to notify the others, but you may want to contact all three yourself.) The alert tells businesses to contact you before opening any new accounts in your name. You can renew the alert every 90 days, or you're entitled to keep it in effect for seven years if you've filed an identity theft report with police.

■ Contact the credit issuer to dispute fraudulent charges and have the bogus account closed.

■ Request your credit report and ask the reporting agencies to remove bogus accounts or any incorrect information from your record. Consider asking the reporting agencies to place a full freeze on your credit. This blocks any business from checking your credit to open a new account, so it's a stronger measure than a credit alert. But you should weigh that against the hassle of notifying credit agencies to lift the freeze—which can take a few days—every time you apply for a loan, open a new account or even sign up for utility service.

■ Submit a report through the FTC website: www.consumer.ftc.gov . Click the "privacy & identity" tab, which will walk you through creating an affidavit you can show to creditors.

■ Keep copies of all reports and correspondence. Use certified mail to get delivery receipts, and keep notes on every phone call.

Nation

CIA report revives legal debate on harsh interrogation

WASHINGTON (AP) -- When the CIA sought permission to use harsh interrogation methods on a captured al-Qaida operative, the response from Bush administration lawyers was encouraging, even clinical.

In one of several memos forming the legal underpinnings for brutal interrogation techniques, the CIA was told Abu Zubaydah could lawfully be placed in a box with an insect, kept awake for days at a time and slapped multiple times in the face. Waterboarding, too, was acceptable because it didn't cause the lengthy mental anguish needed to meet the legal standard of torture, the 2002 Justice Department memo says.

The release last week of a Senate report cataloging years of such interrogation tactics has revived debate about legal opinions since discredited and withdrawn and about the decision to not prosecute the program's architects or officers who used the methods. Civil rights groups in the United States and abroad are renewing calls to prosecute those who relied on techniques that President Barack Obama has called torture.

"How can we seriously use the phrase `rule of law' if crimes of this magnitude go uninvestigated and unprosecuted?" said Jameel Jaffer, deputy legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

The Justice Department, which spent years looking into the matter, says it lacks sufficient evidence to convict anyone and found no new information in the report. It also is far from clear that any international case could be brought.

Department officials said they will not revisit their 2012 decision to close the investigation, citing among other challenges the passage of time and the difficulty of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that crimes were committed, especially in light of government memos that gave interrogators extraordinary latitude.

"Our inquiry was limited to a determination of whether prosecutable offenses were committed. Importantly, our investigation was not intended to answer the broader questions regarding the propriety of the examined conduct," the department said in a statement after the report was released.

That conclusion followed an investigation led by special prosecutor John Durham that began in 2009 as an outgrowth of a probe into the destruction of videotapes of CIA interrogation tactics. The inquiry into interrogation tactics came amid the release of an internal CIA inspector general's report that said CIA interrogators once threatened to kill the children of a Sept. 11 suspect and suggested that another suspected terrorist would be forced to watch his mother being sexually assaulted.

Durham specifically investigated potential crimes in the deaths of two detainees, including one who was shackled to a cold concrete wall in a secret CIA prison, while in custody in Iraq and Afghanistan. In closing the investigation, the department said it had "reviewed a tremendous volume of information" about detainees alleged to have been in U.S. custody but did not find enough evidence to convict anyone.

The investigation focused on instances in which interrogators went beyond what was approved in memos from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel. The Obama administration had said interrogators would not face charges if they followed legal guidelines set forth in the memos, which have been withdrawn.

In great detail, the Bush administration memos explored the legality under the federal torture statute of varied interrogation methods contemplated by the CIA.

The analysis established parameters for conduct, largely assuring the agency that actions now characterized by Obama as torture were legally permissive. The guidance was sought in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, as the country feared another attack. CIA Director John Brennan said at a news conference Thursday he was confident the overall interrogation program saved lives.

One argument in the memos held that certain aggressive interrogation practices were permitted so long as they stopped short of producing pain equivalent to experiencing organ failure or death. Another said they were permissible provided the interrogator's primary objective was to not "inflict severe pain or suffering."

Sleep deprivation, though uncomfortable, was judged acceptable because it did not cause severe physical pain, one memo states. Facial slaps were fine since they did not conjure fears of imminent death. Waterboarding was more problematic but did not result in the requisite "prolonged mental harm."

The government gave itself permission to use the techniques by defining torture "in such a way that almost any action could fall short of that definition," said William Aceves, an international law expert at the California Western School of Law.

Black effigies hanged on Berkeley campus spur debate

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) -- Effigies of black lynching victims found hanging at the University of California, Berkeley have sparked debate over whether the images are powerful protest art or just plain tasteless and racist.

The photographic images were found Saturday morning hanging at two prominent spots on campus. They were discovered a few hours before a demonstration against police brutality organized by a black student union was to start. Police are investigating, but officials say they still don't know who hanged the images or the motivation.

The school's chancellor and provost released a joint statement Saturday calling on those responsible to come forward.

"While we do not know the intent of the effigies, the impact that it has had on our campus community is undeniable," chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks and provost Claude Steele said in the prepared statement.

Social media sites hosted debates between those who viewed the effigies as art and those offended by the images.

Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, a UC Berkeley professor of social psychology who studies prejudice and stereotyping, said he sees no redeeming quality in the images hanged Saturday.

"Given the volatility of the protests, I think it's misguided regardless of the protest," Mendoza-Denton said. "It's inflammatory and is triggering upset and anger."

Others, however, said the effigies may have been a form of "guerrilla art" and that images of lynching victims have been used by artists in the past. The rap group Public Enemy used a photograph of two lynching victims on the cover the single "Hazy Shade of Criminal" released in 1992.

Leigh Raiford, an associate professor of African American studies at UC Berkeley who has written about lynching photography, said the images may have been hanged as an artistic expression.

Raiford said there is a long history of artists and groups like the NAACP using lynching images as part of a campaign to highlight a history of violent racism in the country.

"Somebody really did their homework," Raiford said of the images, each of which had a name of a lynching victim and the year of their death.

Friends say they pushed UVA 'Jackie' to call cops

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP)--Three friends of an alleged victim of gang rape at a University of Virginia frat house say a magazine article wrongly portrayed them as uncaring students who were more concerned about their reputations than her well-being.

The friends told The Associated Press that the Rolling Stone article was wrong on a number of key points, especially its assertion that they urged the victim to not report the attack.

Their alleged indifference was woven into a narrative that used the alleged attack to paint a picture of a culture of sexual violence on college campuses in the United States. The article set off an intense debate about sexual violence, alcohol, fraternities and journalism ethics.

One of the friends, a 20-year-old, third-year student referred to as "Randall" in the Rolling Stone article but whose real name is Ryan Duffin, told the AP that not only did he encourage the alleged victim to go to police, but he started to dial 9-1-1 on his cellphone until she begged off saying she just wanted to go back to her dorm and go to sleep.

"I couldn't help but notice that everything that the article said about me was incorrect," Duffin said.

The AP also spoke with the other two friends portrayed in the article: third-year, 20-year-old U.Va. students Kathryn Hendley and Alex Stock, known as "Cindy" and "Andy" in the article. None of the three friends was contacted by Rolling Stone's reporter, Sabrina Rubin Erdely, before the article was published; each of them rejected multiple assertions made in the article, which has since been retracted.

AP

In this image taken from video, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014, University of Virginia student Alex Stock talks during an interview with The Associated Press in Charlottsville, Va.

All three say Erdely has since reached out to them, and that she has told them she is re-reporting the story. Hendley told the AP Erdely apologized to her for portraying her the way she did.

Erdely and Rolling Stone Managing Editor Will Dana did not respond to an email from The Associated Press on Sunday morning seeking comment.

The three friends say they continue to work on correcting the record about what happened that night, and at least one, Duffin, wonders to what extent he believes the victim's own version of what happened--or whether any discrepancies in her story matter.

"People at U.Va. want answers just as much as I do," Duffin says. "But if anything, the takeaway from all this is that I still don't really care if what's presented in this article is true or not because I think it's far more important that people focus on the issue of sexual assault as a whole."

Other news media have also interviewed the friends, but this is the first time that Duffin has allowed his full name to be used.

A lawyer representing the victim, who has been identified only as "Jackie," has declined several requests by the AP to interview Jackie and did not immediately respond to a request for comment for this article; the AP does not typically name alleged victims of sexual assault.

The Rolling Stone article, published last month, described a culture of sexual violence hiding in plain sight at U.Va. The article has roiled the campus and caused a huge backlash, with U.Va. suspending fraternity activities until January, the Board of Visitors appointing an independent investigator to look into the allegations and the university handing the case over to the Charlottesville police.

Rare northern white rhino dies in US zoo

SAN DIEGO (AP)--A northern white rhinoceros that zoo officials said was only one of six left in the world died Sunday at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

Angalifu, who was about 44 years old, apparently died of old age.

"Angalifu's death is a tremendous loss to all of us," safari park curator Randy Rieches said in a statement. "Not only because he was well beloved here at the park but also because his death brings this wonderful species one step closer to extinction."

His death leaves only one northern white rhino at the zoo - a female named Nola - one at a zoo in the Czech Republic and three in a preserve in Kenya.

Rhino horns are valued as dagger handles and are mistakenly seen as an aphrodisiac. As a result, poaching has pushed the critically endangered rhinos to the brink of extinction.

Attempts to mate Angalifu with Nola weren't successful.

Just last week, preservationists at the Old Pejeta animal sanctuary in Kenya conceded that their one male and two female northern white rhinos will not reproduce naturally. The animals were flown from the Czech zoo to the Kenyan conservancy in December 2009 in hopes the natural environment could be easier for them to breed there than in captivity.

Efforts will now be made to keep the species alive through in vitro fertilization. That experiment could take place with a southern white rhino surrogate mother. Southern white rhinos almost went extinct at the end of the 19th century, plunging down to only 20 at one point. Decades of conservation efforts gradually brought them back to life.

Asia

Five people flee from Sydney hostage-crisis

SYDNEY (AP)—Five people have fled from a Sydney cafe where a gunman took an unknown number of hostages at the height of Monday morning rush hour. Two people inside the cafe were earlier seen holding up a flag containing an Islamic declaration of faith.

The first development came six hours after the hostage crisis began, when three men were seen running from a fire exit of the Lindt Chocolat Cafe in downtown Sydney.

Shortly afterward, two women, one after another, sprinted from the cafe and into the arms of heavily armed police. Both were wearing aprons with the Lindt chocolate logo, indicating they were cafe employees.

"We do not have any information that suggests that anybody is harmed at this stage," New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner Catherine Burn said, after the first three hostages had emerged.

It was not clear how many people remained inside the cafe located at Martin Place, a plaza in the heart of the city's financial and shopping district that is packed with holiday shoppers this time of year. Many of those inside the cafe would have been taken hostage as they stopped in for their morning coffees.

New South Wales state Police Commissioner Andrew Scipione said police did not know the gunman's motivation.

"We have not yet confirmed it is a terrorism-related event," Scipione said. "We're dealing with a hostage situation with an armed offender and we are dealing with it accordingly."

Burn said that police negotiators have made contact with the gunman.

Hundreds of police flooded into the area, streets were closed and offices evacuated. The public was told to stay away from Martin Place, home to the state premier's office, the Reserve Bank of Australia, and the headquarters of two of the nation's largest banks. The state parliament house is a few blocks away.

Television footage shot through the cafe's windows showed several people with their arms in the air and hands pressed against the glass, and two people holding up a black flag with the Shahada, or Islamic declaration of faith, written on it.

This image taken from video shows people holding up hands inside a cafe in Sydney, Australia Monday, Dec. 15, 2014.
AP

ASIAN BRIEFS

US Marine charged with murder of Filipino transgender

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A Philippine government prosecutor says a detained U.S. Marine has been charged with murder in the killing of a Filipino transgender. Prosecutor Emily de los Santos said Monday there was "probable cause" that Marine Pfc. Joseph Scott Pemberton killed Jennifer Laude, whose former name was Jeffrey, in a motel room, where the victim's body was found in October in Olongapo city, northwest of Manila. She had apparently been drowned in a toilet bowl. The emotional case reignited a debate over custody of American military personnel accused of crimes. But the looming irritant between the treaty allies over Pemberton's custody was eased after Washington agreed to move him from a U.S. warship to a Philippine camp, where he remained under American custody with an outer ring of Filipino guards.

US man illegally in NKorea says he's not detained

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)— North Korea on Sunday presented to the media an American man who says he illegally crossed into the country but has not been put into custody and is seeking asylum in Venezuela. Arturo Pierre Martinez, 29, of El Paso, Texas, said he entered North Korea by crossing the river border with China. Details of how and when he got into the country were not immediately clear. In his comments to reporters, Martinez strongly criticized the U.S. for alleged human rights violations. Martinez's mother, Patricia Eugenia Martinez of El Paso, told CNN that her son was bipolar and earlier had tried to enter North Korea by swimming across a river, but was stopped and shipped back to the United States, where he was placed in a California psychiatric hospital.

Karaoke bar fire kills 11 in northern China

BEIJING (AP)—A fire in a karaoke bar in northern China killed 11 people on Monday, local authorities said. The fire happened soon after midnight and a total of 35 people were sent to hospital, the Changyuan county government in Henan province said in an online statement. The county government said the cause of the fire was being investigated.

Japan Abe faces battle on reforms despite vote win

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe faces strong resistance to a promised economic and political overhaul despite a weekend election victory that gives him up to four more years in power.

In Sunday's snap election, the conservative Liberal Democrats who have ruled for most of the post-World War II era locked up a solid majority of at least 291 seats. About 35 seats were claimed by the LDP's coalition partner, the Buddhist-backed Komei party, giving the ruling bloc more than two-thirds of the 475-seat House of Representatives.

That majority will enable the coalition to override resistance in the upper house, but not necessarily the powerful vested interests and bureaucrats opposed to major reforms many economists say are needed to revitalize Japan's economy.

Businesses are reluctant to sink their cash hoards in a shrinking home market, farmers are dead set on keeping their cushion of subsidies and tariffs, and voters remain leery of many of Abe's plans. The election victory changes none of that.

Japan could gain significantly by boosting its productivity through labor reforms and improving business conditions for foreign companies, but such initiatives have made little headway.

"Nor has there been any progress in the government's stated aim of deregulation," Marcel Thieliant of Capital Economics said in a commentary Monday. "Unfortunately, we fear that reform progress will remain glacial in coming years."

AP
Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, smiles as he places a red rosette on the name of his Liberal Democratic Party's winning candidate during ballot counting for the lower house elections at the party headquarters in Tokyo, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014.

The solid majority for the ruling coalition does reduce the likelihood of challenges against Abe from within the Liberal Democratic Party. That could allow him to put off the next election until as late as December 2018.

After his win Sunday, Abe said his top priority was the economy, which fell back into recession after a tax hike in April. "Economy first," he told national broadcaster NHK, adding that he would also tackle other major issues, including national security.

The "Abenomics" blend of aggressive monetary easing, public spending and economic reforms has pushed share prices higher and weakened the value of the Japanese yen, helping big exporters like Toyota Motor Corp. But wages and business investment have remained sluggish, and inflation and growth have fallen short of the targets set by Abe when he took office two years ago.

A quarterly survey of business sentiment released Monday by the Bank of Japan showed a slight deterioration in the outlook for coming months. Conducted after Abe delayed a sales tax hike that had been planned for next year but before Sunday's election, it showed businesses anticipate slack demand and rising costs.

"Abenomics is still halfway through, and I feel a strong sense of responsibility to push it further," said Finance Minister Taro Aso, who retained his seat in parliament.

Abe's agenda includes labor market reforms and securing a trans-Pacific trade agreement that is strongly opposed by the powerful farm and medical lobbies.

He successfully wagered that voters would stick with him despite the recession and qualms among many in Japan over Abe's broader agenda, which includes restarting nuclear plants idled after the March 2011 Fukushima disaster and expanding the country's military role.

The Liberal Democrats held 295 seats before the election, and fell short of forecasts that they could win as many as 320 seats.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan, won 73 seats—a stronger showing than many had expected. But the party's leader, Banri Kaeda, lost his seat and the party remains weak and in disarray after it lost power in 2012.

The Japan Communist Party, a traditional protest vote option, nearly tripled its seats to 21, while another opposition party, the Innovation Party, took 41 seats.

"I believe the results show that we have received a public mandate for the Abe administration's achievement over the past two years," Abe said in a live television interview with Tokyo Broadcasting System. "But we should not be complacent about the results."

In Washington, the White House congratulated Abe on his election victory, calling the U.S.-Japan alliance "the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific." The White House statement expressed appreciation for Abe's "strong leadership" on a wide range of issues from typhoon relief in the Philippines to the Ebola response and the international fight against the Islamic State group.

World

At UN climate talks, a crack in rich-poor barrier

LIMA, Peru (AP)—A last-minute deal that salvaged U.N. climate talks from collapse early Sunday sends a signal the rich-poor divide that long held up progress can be overcome with a year to go before a landmark pact is supposed to be adopted in Paris.

Still, it remains to be seen whether governments can come up with a new formula for how countries in different stages of development should contribute in a way that keeps global warming from reaching dangerous levels.

"This issue will be contentious and it will need to be worked through all the way to Paris," U.S. climate envoy Todd Stern said after the marathon talks in Lima finished, more than 30 hours behind schedule.

The U.N. talks were still far away from reaching any agreement on reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to a level that scientists say would keep global warming in check. But the Paris agreement would be the first to call on all countries to control their emissions.

The U.S. and other developed nations say that means tearing down the firewall in negotiations that compels only rich countries to rein in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Though it was agreed in 2011 that goals set in Paris would be "applicable to all," many developing countries worry they will be required to take on emissions controls that stymie their economic growth. In Lima they angrily rejected a draft text that made no mention of different responsibilities and capabilities to fight global warming.

"We are in a differentiated world. That is the reality," Malaysian negotiator Gurdial Singh Nijar told delegates. "Many of you colonized us, so we started from a completely different point."

Despite the tough rhetoric, the conference ended Sunday with a compromise based on a groundbreaking U.S.-China deal on emissions targets last month.

The Lima decision noted the principle in the 1992 U.N. climate change convention that countries have "common but differentiated responsibilities" to tackle climate change. But like the U.S.-China deal, it added that this should be seen "in light of different national circumstances," suggesting countries' responsibilities change over time as they develop.

AP

Activists perform as heads of state, from left, President Barack Obama, Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott, Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper, China's President Xi Jinping, India's Narendra Modi, Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the Climate Change Conference COP20 in Lima Peru, Friday, Dec. 12, 2014. The boat's sign reads in Spanish "Leave behind emissions. Climatic agreement."

"It sounds like a tiny thing, but it's very important," said Nathaniel Keohane, vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund. "I think we're starting to see the plates move."

How to interpret what it means in practice is going to be critical over the next year as countries firm up their emissions targets for the Paris agreement.

Asked about the implications of the Lima deal, Chinese negotiator Su Wei repeated China's mantra that the purpose of the Paris agreement is to "reinforce and enhance" the 1992 convention, not rewrite it.

"This paragraph may represent a compromise that both sides can interpret as they choose to," said Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Yet the joint announcement with the U.S. signaled that China is ready to assume a bigger role in the global response to climate change. For the first time, the world's biggest carbon polluter set a fixed target to peak emissions by 2030.

Showing signs that it, too, anticipates the end of a binary view of the world, Brazil put forth a proposal of "concentric circles" with different expectations for developed, emerging economies and least-developed countries.

The final agreement in Lima didn't address Brazil's proposal, though it noted that climate action plans by least-developed countries and small island nations should reflect their "special circumstances."

All countries are supposed to present their plans to control emissions before the Paris agreement next year. In Lima, negotiators listed things that countries "may" want to include in their pledges, such as time frames, base years and methods for calculating emissions.

China and other developing countries blocked a proposal for a review process that would allow the pledges to be compared against each other. Instead, the U.N. climate agency will prepare a report analyzing the "aggregate" effect of all pledges a month before Paris.

Meanwhile, rich countries resisted any firm commitments of money to help poor countries tackle climate change, though many separately announced pledges to a Green Climate Fund set up for that purpose.

Environmental groups worried the outcome of the Paris talks will be a purely voluntary system where both developed and developing countries propose weak voluntary actions without regard to the deep emissions cuts scientists say are needed to avoid dangerous levels of warming.

Emissions keep rising every year because cuts in rich countries aren't enough to offset fast growth in China, India and other emerging economies. Meanwhile, climate impacts ranging from sea level rise and increasingly freakish weather are becoming more noticeable as warming continues. This year could go down as the hottest on record.

"Political leaders at the U.N. talks need to be reminded that they can't negotiate with the climate," said Mohamed Adow, a climate change expert at Christian Aid. "Otherwise we're in danger of sleepwalking into a failed deal in Paris."

Denmark claims North Pole via Greenland ridge link

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP)—Scientific data shows Greenland's continental shelf is connected to a ridge beneath the Arctic Ocean, giving Danes a claim to the North Pole and any potential energy resources beneath it, Denmark's foreign minister said.

Foreign Minister Martin Lidegaard said Denmark will deliver a claim on Monday to a United Nations panel in New York that will eventually decide control of the area, which Russia and Canada are also coveting.

The five Arctic countries—the United States, Russia, Norway, Canada and Denmark—all have areas surrounding the North Pole, but only Canada and Russia had indicated an interest in it before Denmark's claim.

Lidegaard told the AP that the Arctic nations so far "have stuck to the rules of the game" and he hoped they would continue to do so.

In 2008, the five pledged that control of the North Pole region would be decided in an orderly settlement in the framework of the United Nations, and possible overlapping claims would be dealt with bilaterally.

Interest in the Arctic is intensifying as global warming shrinks the polar ice, opening up possible resource development and new shipping lanes.

The area is believed to hold an estimated 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and 30 percent of its untapped gas.

Lidegaard said he expects no quick decisions, with other countries also sending in claims.

"This is a historical milestone for Denmark and many others as the area has an impact on the lives of lot of people. After the U.N. panel had taken a decision based on scientific data, comes a political process," Lidegaard told The Associated Press in an interview on Friday. "I expect this to take some time. An answer will come in a few decades."

Between 2007 and 2012, Danish scientists with colleagues from Canada, Sweden and Russia surveyed a 2,000-kilometer- (1,240-mile-)long underwater mountain range that runs north of Siberia concluding that Greenland, a sparsely populated huge island that is a semi-autonomous Danish territory, is geologically attached to the ridge.

That prompted Danes to claim the right to exploit an area of 895,000 square kilometers (345,600 square miles).

"The Lomonosov ridge is the natural extension of the Greenland shelf," "said Christian Marcussen, a senior geophysicist with the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland. "Coincidentally, the North Pole which is a tiny, tiny abstract spot lies in the area."

WORLD BRIEFS

Mali: 4 prisoners exchanged for French hostage

PARIS (AP)—The Malian government says it exchanged four prisoners to secure the release of a French hostage held for three years by al-Qaida's North African branch. The liberation of Serge Lazarevic last week revived debate among Western governments over whether to negotiate with hostage-takers. Mali government spokesman Mahamane Baby said Sunday that al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb demanded the release of six prisoners "but the government freed only four, including two Malians." The French government has not publicly confirmed a prisoner exchange or explained the circumstances of Lazarevic's release. France insists it pays no ransoms and does not exchange prisoners, although President Francois Hollande has acknowledged that other countries have done so, "to help us."

Palestinians seek end-of-occupation vote this week

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—Palestinian officials say they plan to push for a U.N. Security Council vote this week on a resolution setting a November 2016 deadline for ending Israeli occupation. The announcement came late Sunday after a meeting of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas with officials from his Fatah movement and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Officials say the Jordanian-backed resolution is to be submitted by Wednesday. Another proposal, by France, would set a time limit of two years for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Israel opposes the resolutions. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is meeting with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Europe to try to find a compromise. U.S. officials say they are not opposed to a new Security Council resolution but that none of the drafts that have been offered so far are acceptable.

13 workers killed at power plant site in Ecuador

QUITO, Ecuador (AP)—A sudden collapse at the site of Ecuador's largest-ever infrastructure project killed 13 people and injured a dozen more, officials said Sunday. The Chinese embassy in Quito confirmed that 10 Ecuadorean and three Chinese workers were killed over the weekend at the construction site of the Coca Codo Sinclair hydroelectric power plant. The Chinese firm Sinohydro is building the $2 billion 1,500-megawatt power plant. A statement on the embassy's website described the accident as a "collapse in a pressure well" at the site deep in Ecuador's Amazon. It said two of the injured workers were in serious condition. A tweet from the account of President Rafael Correa offered condolences to those who knew the workers. "Our hearts go out to their families and co-workers," it said. Sinohydro has implemented emergency procedures and is conducting an internal investigation, according to the embassy.

Focus

By HAMZA HENDAWI
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP

In this Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014 photo, Egyptian lawyer Ragia Omran speaks on her mobile phone after a trial session of activists facing charges on organizing unauthorized protests, at a courtroom in Cairo, Egypt.

A lonely fight defending Egypt's jailed dissidents

CAIRO (AP)— When a group of activists is arrested in Egypt, the call for help goes most often to lawyer Ragia Omran. She then starts a long trek through police stations and prosecutors' offices, trying to get their release or at least some respect for their rights.

It's a lonely, grueling struggle, and not one Omran expected to have to wage. In 2011, she was among the revolutionaries who took to the streets and led an uprising that brought down Egypt's long-ruling autocrat Hosni Mubarak. The revolt gave rise to a brief period of greater freedoms and hope for real democracy.

Nearly four years later, all that has been reversed. Many of the secular and liberal revolutionaries are in prison under a clampdown by the government of army chief-turned-president Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi. There is zero tolerance for dissent. Police have become notorious once more for abuses they carry out with impunity. There is less democracy now, the uprising's leaders say, than under Mubarak.

Defending arrested activists is Omran's way of keeping the revolution alive.

"We are not going to accept that the police state will continue to run the country unchallenged. There have to be people who object to this, and we are going to be those people—I and the others who are with me," she said one afternoon after a court hearing for 25 young men on trial for breaking a draconian law effectively banning protests which was adopted a year ago.

"I cannot give up. My friends and family want me to leave the country. I cannot," she told The Associated Press in one of several recent interviews.

Dozens have been arrested under the protest law, which allows for heavy prison sentences for even peaceful marches. The law has mainly been used to go after secular critics. Authorities have also arrested more 20,000 Islamists since el-Sissi's 2013 overthrow of then-President Mohammed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the same time, activists and civil society workers face a relentless media campaign demonizing them as troublemakers causing instability or foreign agents trying to bring down the state. The smear campaign resonates with many Egyptians who long for normalcy after years of turmoil—meaning there is almost no public sympathy for jailed activists or those who defend them.

Revolution supporters have been left demoralized. Some are in prison, some have left the country. Some, as Omran puts it, are getting married and trying to live their lives.

Others, like Omran and human rights lawyers doing similar work, are simply doing what they can.

The 41-year-old Omran earns her living as a corporate lawyer. Defending activists is her volunteer work. That can mean punishing hours. One recent day, she attended the signing of a nearly $700 million loan deal that her firm helped work out. In the days that followed, she was in court representing jailed activists, tromping into police stations to find clients, and visiting prisons, trying to bring food and other supplies to detainees.

She often keeps clothes in her car so she can make quick changes out of her corporate business suit and heels. Her mobile gets a constant stream of texts and calls. Sometimes she herself cooks food to take to inmates—things that can go a few days without spoiling.

Standing only 5 feet tall (1.53 meters), she charges with determined steps into prisons, police stations and courtrooms, where she meets constant resistance from authorities.

"In the first two years after the revolution, police and the Interior Ministry were careful with us because they didn't want bad publicity," she said. "Now they don't care... This regime does not care about its image, the law or regulations."

On a recent day, for example, she tried to take supplies to the imprisoned Alaa Abdel-Fattah, one of the most prominent icons of the 2011 uprising. She was able to take him some canned goods, but guards barred writing materials or a radio—even though such items are allowed. Abdel-Fattah and his co-defendants are kept separated in prison, each housed with criminal convicts, and any inmate who tries to help them by giving them anything is punished, Omran said.

Last week, she went to visit a teenager who was jailed during protests in January. He has been held without charge ever since, largely forgotten, in what Omran calls one of the dirtiest of Cairo's prisons.

She tried to take him newspapers, books, a sketch pad and some pastries—but all were blocked by the prison authorities. Still, she said, he "was so happy that we visited him."

A graduate in political science from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania—with law degrees from universities in Cairo and London—Omran is a 20-year veteran of political activism. During the 18-day uprising against Mubarak, she says she spent every day in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the symbolic heart of the uprising.

She was one of several activists featured in The Square—an Oscar-nominated documentary about the revolution—and she walked the Red Carpet with the director and other activists during the Oscars ceremony. Last year she was awarded the prestigious Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

Like many activists, she looks back to try to find where things went wrong. She points to the day Mubarak resigned, Feb. 11, 2011, when the military stepped in to rule directly. That put an institution intertwined with Mubarak's rule in charge of a political process she says the revolution should have directed.

"We have been set up big time," she said. "We should not have left the square, we should not have let the army run the country and we should have demanded a civilian government from day one."

"In retrospect, I think the main mistake was that we did not have a leader," she said.

The frustration weighs heavily.

"I am beyond depressed," Omran text-messaged an AP reporter on Nov. 29, the day a court dismissed the case against Mubarak over the killing of nearly 900 protesters during the uprising.

Days later, she sent another text: "Yesterday was a day from hell."

She was attending a two-day conference in Tunisia on torture in detention while, back in Egypt, police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse hundreds protesting the Mubarak verdict. Twenty-nine were arrested. Omran worked the phones until late from her Tunis hotel and managed to get all but four released.

"I swear this is what always happens to me every time I travel," she texted.

She also knows that authorities are looking for any pretext to act against her.

During a recent trial session, she received an urgent call, so she quickly hurried out of the courtroom to take it. The judge accused her of showing contempt for the judiciary, and she was questioned by prosecutors on the charge last month. Omran insists she was not speaking on the phone while still in the courtroom.

Throughout, she and other activists have to face the question of whether protests are effective any more.

During a recent protest, she recounted, 50 people formed a human chain. Half of them were arrested, so she and fellow lawyers made the usual tour of police stations to try and free them.

"It's a headache. Why you guys want to do this? You want to be in jail? It is not great, it is not cool to be in jail," she said. She emphasized that she is a firm supporter of the right to protest—but for now, there's no way to get out large numbers to make a difference.

"A lot of those who protest today now are young and desperate, I understand that, but there is zero public support now."

Overdrive

Healthy doses of style, handling and refinement transform the 2015 Camry

AP

The Camry XLE comes with a responsive and intuitive touch-screen navigation system. A 10-speaker JBL audio system, heated leather seats, LED daytime lights and a moon roof are also included.

By DAVID UNDERCOFFLER
LOS ANGELES TIMES

For years, Toyota's Camry has dominated the family sedan segment with a focus on comfort and reliability— and blithe disregard for the particulars of handling and style.

The bland formula has made the trusty Camry the nation's bestselling passenger sedan for 12 consecutive years.

That won't work for another 12 years. The last generation Camry, built from 2011 to 2014, had fallen behind the likes of the Mazda6, Ford Fusion, Chrysler 200 and others in build quality, aesthetics and driving enjoyment.

But the 2015 Camry is a stiff counterpunch. Though the powertrains are unchanged, healthy doses of style, handling and refinement transform this sedan.

The redesigned Camry is the latest example of a larger corporate effort to add driving excitement and style to Toyota and Lexus cars, without losing their legendary reliability. The effort works. The new model moves the Camry— on sale now, starting at $23,795— from the lower rung of the segment to a serious contender.

The improvements are most obvious in the Camry's cabin. Gone are the Kmart-quality materials in the outgoing model.

The doors close with a newfound authority. The interior trim is made from soft-touch materials. The instrument panel and dashboard buttons look and feel upscale.

Toyota also baked in extra sound-deadening materials. The Camry feels as quiet and solid as its peers, save for some wind noise at high freeway speeds. There's plenty of space throughout the car for tall people, especially in the back. The seats are stiff and shapeless, though they were better in the four-cylinder model than the V-6.

Though the changes to the Camry's insides added between 50 and 90 pounds, depending on the model, it's a worthwhile tradeoff. Fuel economy remains unchanged.

The four-cylinder makes 178 horsepower and 170 pound-feet of torque. It's rated at 25 mpg in the city and 35 mpg on the highway. During 200 miles of testing in mixed driving, we averaged 25 mpg.

NUTS & BOLTS

2015 Toyota Camry

Times take: A mid-life update to be proud of
Highs: Impressive upgrades to interior refinement, huge back seat
Lows: Wind noise at freeway speeds, fuel economy not at top of segment
Vehicle type: Four-door midsize family sedan
Base price: $23,795
Price as tested: $30,575
Powertrain: 2.5-liter, direct-injected four-cylinder engine, front-wheel-drive
Transmission: six-speed automatic
Horsepower: 178
Torque: 170 pound-feet
Zero-to-60 mph: 8.4 seconds, according to Edmunds.com
EPA fuel economy rating: 25 mpg city, 35 mpg highway

Toyota left the mechanicals of the Camry alone. All three powertrains carry over: the base four-cylinder, the V-6, and the hybrid. We tested both the base model and the V-6.

As before, the four-cylinder engine does its job without any drama or fuss. It has good power from a dead stop, and plenty for daily driving, though it does gasp for breath when pushed hard. But for drivers looking for efficient, quiet power, this is more than adequate.

The V-6 XLE model starts at $32,195 and makes 268 horsepower and 248 pound-feet of torque. This engine delivered ample and smooth passing power on the freeway, a definite upgrade from the four-banger, and was admirably quiet around town. The V-6 is rated at 21 mpg in the city and 31 mpg on the highway. Over a long weekend with the car in mixed driving, we saw a 21 mpg average.

Both of these engines came matched with front-wheel-drive and a smooth-shifting six-speed automatic transmission with sport mode.

Toyota also upgraded the suspension and steering of the 2015 Camry. It's a mixed effort. Though it's no Mazda6, the Camry does handle with an extra dash of enthusiasm, while remaining comfortable over rough roads.

But the steering on the V-6 model was too numb. Curiously, it was better, though not great, on the four-cylinder version. And the brakes felt oddly spongy, the kind of feel you'd expect on a low-rent hybrid car with regenerative brakes.

Toyota finished the 2015 effort with an all-new body. It softens many of the hard angles and edges from the outgoing version, and the new curves give it a more elegant persona. But it's still on the generic side of things, and not everyone will love the overbearing grille, which resembles a grinning fish.

Despite the $23,795 entry price, Toyota packs a lot of standard features into the base LE model. Highlights include power front seats, heated side-view mirrors, a 6.1-inch touch-screen stereo system, faux-wood trim, 10 air bags, stability control and brake assist.

The sport-tuned SE model returns, and based on its popularity, Toyota added an up-market XSE model to the Camry lineup. It keeps the SE's sporty inclinations— tighter suspension tuning and more aggressive styling— but adds the luxury of the XLE.

Our test car was an XLE. This trim level comes with a responsive and intuitive touch-screen navigation system. A 10-speaker JBL audio system, real-time traffic updates, heated leather seats, LED daytime lights and moon roof were also included.

It also added safety-minded options like radar-based cruise control, lane-departure warning and blind-spot monitoring. The loaded four-cylinder sells for $30,575, while the same trim with the V-6 sells for $34,990. Both sums are the going rate for loaded mid-size sedans these days.

Apparently, Toyota didn't need to do all of this. More than 400,000 people took home a new Camry last year, and sales through October are on track to beat that frantic pace.

The automaker could probably have kept that lead by slapping on some extra chrome or tossing in an extra air bag or two.

But that wouldn't been enough to catch the Camry's rapidly improving rivals. After several years of lagging behind, this new Camry's execution finally matches its popularity.

MOTORING Q&A

Radio plays in the dead of night

By PAUL BRAND
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Q: I have a 2004 Ford F-350 dualie diesel. One night at 2 a.m. I heard my radio blaring from inside my house. When I went outside there was no one near my truck. The key was in my pocket but the radio was playing and I could use all my electric window controls. Since then I've been taking out the fuse out every time I turn off my truck so the battery won't die. I replaced the ignition switch but it didn't help. Any ideas?

A: Recognizing that both the radio and power windows are controlled by the accessory delay system, which maintains power to these systems even after the ignition is turned off until you exit the vehicle, I'd check the C2075 accessory delay relay in the central junction box, located behind the lower dash panel on the driver's side. I suspect this relay might be grounding or sticking, causing the accessory systems to come on. If so, it's an easy fix.

Q: I have a 2004 GMC Envoy with the 4.2-liter engine and 106,000 miles. It sounds like a diesel on startup. My neighbor keeps asking what diesel is in it. I have run it with the serpentine belt removed and there is no change. I would describe it as a loud rattle with lifter noise. It sounds about the same from both sides and it gets only slightly better as it warms up. I have always changed the oil at 5,000 miles using conventional oil. Any thoughts?

A: By temporarily removing the serpentine belt, you've eliminated all the ancillary components as culprits. I would suggest purchasing an inexpensive automotive stethoscope to listen precisely to engine components that could be generating the rattle. With the engine running and making the noise, work your way down each side of the valve cover, listening carefully for a valve/cam issue from the dual overhead cams. Also, carefully listen at several points on the front timing cover as well as the front of the valve cover to determine if the noise originates from the timing gears/chain assembly.

Noise from the upper valve train— cam, rocker arms, valves, valve guides— could be from wear or could be from carbon buildup in the valve guides. Adding half a can of Sea Foam to the oil to help soften and remove these deposits may quiet the engine down. I've had some success by removing the valve cover on a warm engine and pouring Sea Foam directly on the valves and guides and letting it sit overnight before starting.

If the noise is originating from the timing gears or chain, I'd be more concerned. A worn chain or guides or even worn oil pump components located behind the timing chain could mean bigger issues.

Q: I have a 2013 Ford Escape. It has front-wheel drive with the Intelligent 4-wheel drive system. Two tires got ruined so I had to purchase two new tires. The original P235/45R19 rear tires have 24,000 miles on them and are in good shape. Someone told me I should not replace just two tires with this type of drive system. Are they right or wrong? And will it hurt anything just replacing two tires?

A: If all four tires are not within a few percentage points of being the same diameter, potential damage can occur. A new P235/45R19 tire measures 27.33 inches in diameter. If your original rear tires are roughly 50 percent worn at 24,000 miles, they will have roughly 6/32 inch of the original 11/32 inch of tread remaining. Subtracting 5/32 from 10/32 from each "end" of the diameter leaves a diameter of roughly 27.0175 inches", a difference of just about 1 percent.

The system in your vehicle provides torque to the front wheels and sends torque to the rear wheels only when it senses slippage, which reduces the potential for driveline stress. It's your car and your call, but with that small a difference in tire diameters, I don't think you'd have a problem.

Paul Brand, author of How to Repair Your Car*, is an automotive troubleshooter, driving instructor and former race-car driver. Readers may write to him at:* Star Tribune*, 425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn., 55488 or via email at paulbrand@startribune.com. Please explain the problem in detail and include a daytime phone number. Because of the volume of mail, we cannot provide personal replies.*

Life & Style

Bond producers say screenplay stolen in Sony hack

LONDON (AP)—The producers of James Bond films have acknowledged that an early version of the screenplay for the new movie "SPECTRE" was among the material stolen in the massive cyberattack on Sony Pictures Entertainment.

The producers said in a statement Saturday that they are concerned that third parties who received the screenplay might seek to publish it—and warned the material is subject to copyright protection around the world.

The producers promised to "take all necessary steps to protect their rights against the persons who stole the screenplay, and against anyone who makes infringing uses of it or attempts to take commercial advantage of confidential property it knows to be stolen."

The warning was issued by EON productions, the U.K. affiliate of Danjaq LLC, the U.S.-based company that co-owns, with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios, the copyright to the Bond films and their merchandising.

There's been speculation that North Korea is behind the cyberattack in retaliation for the upcoming comedy "The Interview." That film depicts an assassination attempt on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. North Korea has condemned the film, but denied the hack.

The revelation is just the latest among the spectacular leaks that are causing continuing embarrassment for Sony.

Highly sensitive material is being leaked almost daily, including an exchange between Oscar-winning producer Scott Rudin and Sony Pictures Entertainment co-chairman, Amy Pascal. Rudin called Angelina Jolie a "spoiled brat" and made racially offensive jokes about President Barack Obama's presumed taste in movies.

Rudin and Pascal have apologized.

The next 007 adventure, -called "SPECTRE," after the dastardly fictional terrorist organization featured in "Dr. No"—is so hotly anticipated that even the revelation of its title was a media event. It will be Daniel Craig's fourth film as Bond.

AP

In this Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014, file photo actor Daniel Craig poses for photographers at the announcement for the new Bond film, the 24th in the series, at Pinewood Studios in west London.

Can Amy Pascal's career survive Sony cyberattack?

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Amy Pascal, one of the most powerful women in the man's world that is Hollywood and the force behind such critical and commercial hits as "The Social Network" and "American Hustle," has had better days.

Pascal

The co-chairman of the studio and chief of its film division is under fire for racist remarks about President Obama's presumed choice in movies that surfaced in emails made public by the Sony cyberattack.

Pascal also faces criticism for green-lighting the film that may have inspired the hacking to begin with: "The Interview," which stars Seth Rogen and James Franco as bumbling journalists tasked with killing North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

North Korea has denied responsibility for the attack, but praised it as a "righteous deed." Earlier this year, the country's foreign ministry said the film's release would be an "act of war" and promised "merciless" retaliation.

"The Interview" is not the first film to target political leaders, or even North Korea. "Team America: World Police" famously took aim at Kim's father, Kim Jong Il. This also isn't the first time a powerful executive has been dogged by private comments made public. But can Pascal's career survive such a double whammy?

The 56-year-old thinks so.

"I'd be surprised if my entire legacy was based on the leak of the email exchange," Pascal told industry website The Wrap on Thursday. Virtually unknown outside of Hollywood, her nearly 20-year tenure at Sony and Columbia Pictures has included some very well-known films, such as "Skyfall," ''Superbad," ''Salt," ''Fury" and "The Equalizer." Pascal was fourth on The Hollywood Reporter's annual ranking released this week of the most powerful women in entertainment.

She apologized Thursday for the "insensitive and inappropriate" comments in her emails that she says are "not an accurate reflection of who I am." Oscar-winning producer Scott Rudin, who participated in the racist exchange, apologized as well. Rudin, incidentally, was a producer of "Team America."

Pascal's decision to bring "The Interview" to theaters isn't as problematic as the unflattering image created by her own private emails, said branding expert Dorie Clark.

"She's on solid ground rhetorically when she talks about the fact that Sony Pictures Entertainment is never going to back down from releasing a film because of the threat of what hackers might do," Clark said.

Rogen thanked Pascal for having the courage to make the film at its premiere Thursday, where Sony took the unusual step of denying press interviews.

Clark said Pascal's professional network will determine the continued viability of her career.

"What's going to decide her future is how close she is with her boss and what kind of relationship she has with the board. This scandal is survivable," she said. "It depends on how many people there are in Hollywood who want to put a knife in her back."

Clark said the studio's financial success under Pascal is likely to play into her fate, noting the company's revenues are up 13 percent over the past fiscal year. The studio underwent a multi-million-dollar cost-cutting campaign the previous year after a few flops, including the Jamie Foxx-Channing Tatum action flick, "White House Down."

Crisis-management specialist Michael Levine said corporate leaders are far more forgiving of those who are generating profits, especially since Pascal followed the "four golden rules of redemption" after the email leak: Contrition, humility, taking responsibility and responding quickly.

"If one is successful for an organization, they're given every benefit of the doubt," he said.

Pascal and Sony did not respond to requests for comment Friday.

The massive Sony hack not only revealed private emails sent by top executives, it also made thousands of employee Social Security numbers public and leaked five new Sony films, including "Annie," which opens next week.

The juiciest aspect, though, has been the emails, which offer an uncensored peek behind the curtain at how Hollywood does business. In one of the messages, Rudin called Angelina Jolie a "minimally talented spoiled brat." Pascal and Jolie crossed paths this week at an industry breakfast event, but no fireworks flew.

Ironically, the flap over the hack attack could boost box office returns for "The Interview," which opens on Christmas.

"The circumstances are nothing anyone would covet or want in their marketing plan... But now that it's happened, it may end up helping the movie," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for box-office tracker Rentrak. "It's raised the awareness of the film to an incredible level that it otherwise might not have enjoyed were it not for this situation.

Wahlberg plea underscores risk of issuing pardons

BOSTON (AP)—Actor Mark Wahlberg's plea for a pardon has focused fresh attention on excusing criminal acts—something governors rarely do because it's so politically risky.

Massachusetts hasn't approved a pardon in more than a decade. Republican Mitt Romney didn't pardon anyone before he left as governor in 2007. Only now, in the twilight of his eight years in office, has Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick recommended any pardons.

"It's hard politics to get pardons before the Governor's Council," Patrick said, referring to the elected body that has the final say.

Patrick, long an outspoken advocate of giving second chances, has thrown his support behind four pardons and a commutation as he prepares to turn the office over to Republican Gov.-elect Charlie Baker. If approved, they would be the first pardons in Massachusetts since 2002 and the first commuted sentence in 17 years.

Wahlberg isn't among them. His request, filed last month, is pending before the state parole board, which hasn't decided whether to grant a hearing or make a recommendation to the governor.

The actor is seeking a pardon for violent assaults committed as a troubled teen in Boston in 1988, when he hit a man in the head with a wooden stick while trying to steal alcohol from a convenience store and punched another man in the face while trying to avoid police. He was sentenced to three months in jail and served about 45 days.

In the request, Wahlberg said he dedicated himself to becoming a better person in his adult years so he could be a role model.

AP

In this June 19, 2014 file photo, American actor Mark Wahlberg arrives for the world premiere of the movie "Transformers 4: Age of Extinction" in Hong Kong.

But his case underscores the bad politics that pardons can represent for someone like Patrick with potential presidential aspirations. Or, for that matter, for an incoming governor like Baker trying to get a new administration off the ground.

If the past is any guide, there's little to gain and a lot to lose.

Mike Huckabee's presidential aspirations were fouled in part by pardons during his time as Arkansas governor, including one in 2000 of a felon who later killed four Seattle-area police officers. Tim Pawlenty took flak for pardoning a Minnesota sex offender who was accused of reoffending in 2010, and he later withdrew from the race for the GOP presidential nomination in 2012.

In 1995, Massachusetts Gov. William Weld commuted the sentence of a man who spent 23 years in jail for murder but won his release by telling of how he'd become addicted to heroin while serving in the Vietnam War. Two years later, the man was sent back to prison after it was revealed he had lied about his service.

Even though the state's governors have been stingy with pardons, there's been no shortage of requests.

Since Patrick took office in 2007, more than 900 pardon and commutation petitions have been filed with the board of pardons—including a surge in requests in the past year, in part because of new guidelines put into effect by the Patrick administration to make it easier to qualify for clemency.

The changes make commutations possible for those serving unduly harsh sentences and allow pardons for those who can show they've made an extraordinary contribution to their community—a new twist that may have prompted Wahlberg to make his request. Under the old guidelines, applicants had to prove they needed the pardon to find work or have another compelling reason.

Among those Patrick is offering clemency is Deanne Hamilton, 49, who has served more than half of a 7 1/2-year sentence for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute in a school zone. At the time, Hamilton was an addict living in an apartment located about 700 feet from a Brockton school.

Bill Cosby breaks silence on the media, his wife

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Bill Cosby broke his silence amid a flood of rape accusations in a very brief interview with The New York Post's Page Six.

"Let me say this. I only expect the black media to uphold the standards of excellence in journalism and when you do that you have to go in with a neutral mind," Cosby told the publication's Stacy Brown, who noted that she frequently writes for African-American publications.

Cosby, 77, has stayed silent in light of the more than two dozen women who have come forward to accuse him of having drugged and raped them. The alleged incidents go as far back as the 1960s.

In the interview, Cosby also addressed how his wife, Camille Cosby, has weathered the allegations and ongoing public scrutiny.

"Love and the strength of womanhood," he said. "Let me say it again, love and the strength of womanhood. And, you could reverse it, the strength of womanhood and love."

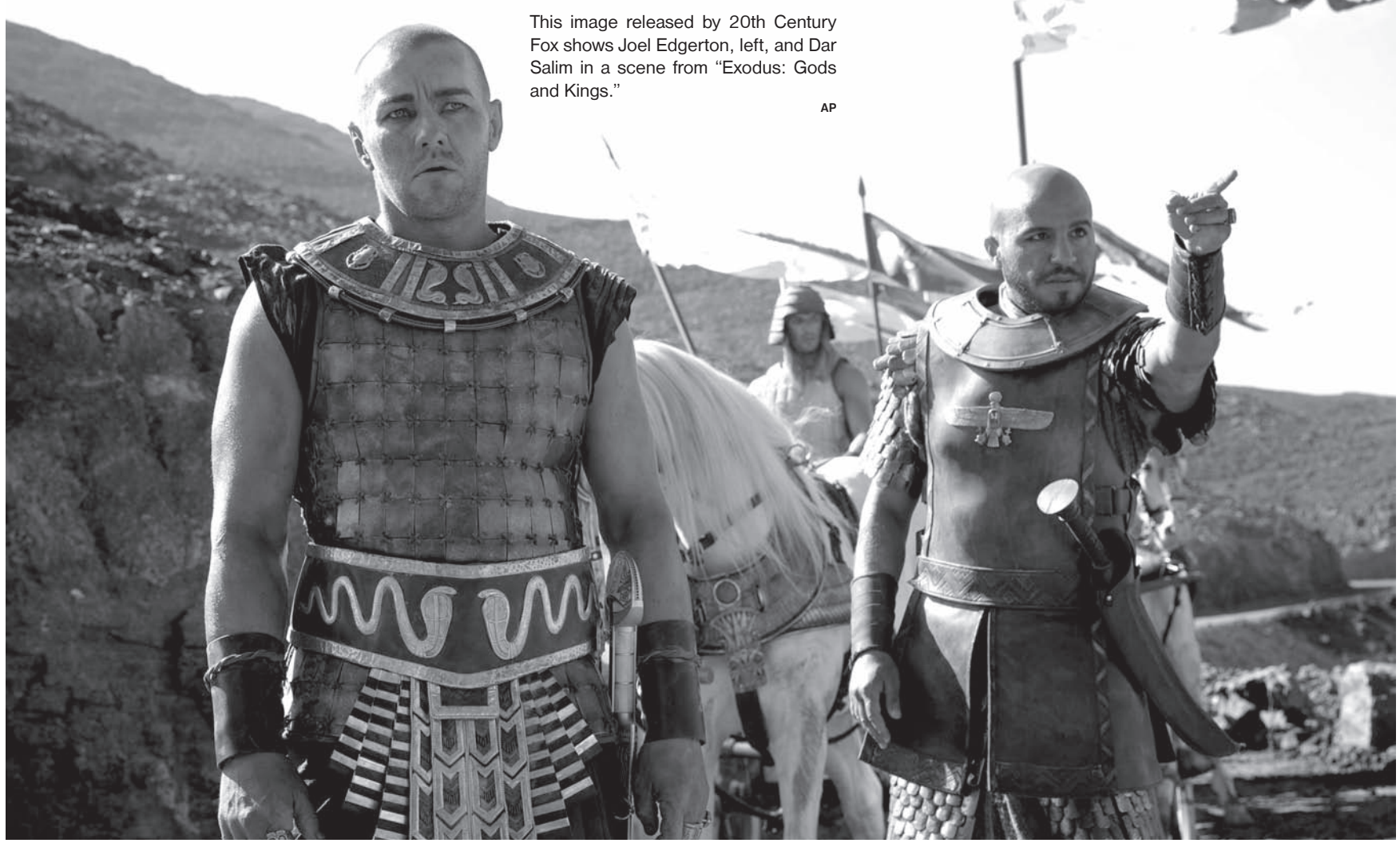
Cosby declined to address the rape and sexual assault allegations, though. According to the report, he's been advised not to discuss the ongoing cases with the media.

Brown wrote that the comedian, speaking from his Massachusetts home, sounded "upbeat" on the phone.

The Page Six interview ended abruptly, though, when Cosby told the reporter that "they" don't want him talking to the media.

Reps for Cosby did not immediately respond to the AP's request for comment.

'Exodus: Gods and Kings' conquers the box office



This image released by 20th Century Fox shows Joel Edgerton, left, and Dar Salim in a scene from "Exodus: Gods and Kings."

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—After three weeks of box office dominance, "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 1" ceded its reign to "Exodus: Gods and Kings." The biblical epic easily ruled the weekend with a $24.5 million debut, according to box office tracker Rentrak's Sunday estimates, while "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies" dominated international charts with a staggering $117.6 million from 38 territories in advance of its North America release this week.

"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 1," down 40 percent from last weekend, came in a distant second, earning $13.2 million.

1. **"Exodus: Gods and Kings,"** $24.5 million *($18.8 million international).*
2. **"The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 1,"** $13.2 million *($16 million international).*
3. **"Penguins of Madagascar,"** $7.3 million *($14.7 million international).*
4. **"Top Five,"** $7.2 million.
5. **"Big Hero 6,"** $6.1 million *($3.9 million international).*
6. **"Interstellar,"** $5.5 million *($11.4 million international).*
7. **"Horrible Bosses 2,"** $4.6 million *($5.9 million international).*
8. **"Dumb and Dumber To,"** $2.8 million *($2.2 million international).*
9. **"The Theory of Everything,"** $2.5 million *($1.8 million international).*
10. **"Wild,"** $1.6 million.

With an expensive $140 million production budget, "Exodus: Gods and Kings" met expectations in its first weekend. But it failed to live up to the precedent set by some recent biblically themed films, including "Noah," which opened to $43.7 million in March.

"I think Hollywood is learning that putting epic, biblical stories on the big screen comes at a pretty heavy price. It's not easy to do this," said Rentrak senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian.

Fox's domestic distribution chief Chris Aronson said he is happy about the performance of his studio's film.

"We're feeling great," Aronson said. "We came in right where our expectations were."

According to the studio, opening weekend crowds for the film were divided fairly evenly down gender lines, but they skewed older with 65 percent over the age of 25.

"It's a very diverse audience," said Aronson, noting that 20 percent were African-American and 18 percent Hispanic. "It's a movie for everyone."

Also new in theaters, "Top Five," from writer, director and star Chris Rock, opened strongly. The Paramount-distributed comedy took in an estimated $7.2 million from only 979 locations to take the fourth-place spot right behind "Penguins of Madagascar."

"It's exactly what we needed to get this movie up and running," said Megan Colligan, Paramount's president of worldwide distribution. "It gives us the right rhythm to keep building and building. I think it's going to benefit from great word of mouth."

"Top Five" will expand each weekend before hitting 2,000 screens by Jan. 1.

Despite the fact that nearly all expectations were met for this weekend's new openers, it paled in comparison to last year, which saw the opening of the second "Hobbit" film. Also, the overall box office is still down over 5 percent for the year, and the deficit is only growing.

"We're running out of racetrack," Dergarabedian said. "We're not going to have a record-breaking year."

But there is a silver lining, he said.

"For me, the hot spots are in the indie world," said Dergarabedian, noting the impressive five-screen, $300,000 debut for Paul Thomas Anderson's "Inherent Vice," and the stunning growth of awards-friendly films such as "The Imitation Game," "Birdman" and "Wild," which expanded to 116 screens and cracked the top 10 with $1.6 million.

Obamas get into holiday spirit at benefit concert

President Barack Obama, left, watches first lady Michelle Obama, gives performer Rita Ora, right, a hug at the closing of the taping of the annual 2014 Christmas in Washington presentation at the National Building Museum in Washington, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014.

AP

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Obamas celebrated the holiday season Sunday with "The Rock" and singers Rita Ora and Darius Rucker.

President Barack Obama and his family attended the 33rd annual "Christmas in Washington" concert Sunday at the National Building Museum. The event is a benefit for the Children's National Health System.

Before the concert, Obama, his wife, Michelle, and daughters, Sasha and Malia, presented gifts— including a basket of children's books— to former patients of the center. The six youngsters, dressed as elves, posed for portraits with the first family.

"Fast and Furious" actor Dwayne Johnson, also known as "The Rock," hosted the concert and jokingly sang his own rendition of "Deck the Halls."

Other performers at the Christmas celebration included Christina Perri, Aloe Blacc and Earth, Wind and Fire. Obama bopped his head to Hunter Hayes' version of the Chuck Berry hit "Run, Run Rudolph."

Following the carols, Obama reminded guests of the reason for the holiday.

"Jesus lived a life of peace, love, kindness and forgiveness," he said. "During the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, may we all do our best to follow his example."

Obama also thanked servicemembers for their sacrifices.

The concert will be broadcast Friday evening on TNT.

Christmas cutie: Prince George images released

AP

In this photo provided by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and taken in late Nov. 2014, Britain's Prince George poses for a photograph in a courtyard at Kensington Palace, London.

LONDON (AP)—This little prince already knows how to mug for the camera.

With a sly grin and robust rosy cheeks, Prince George looks cheerful and self-assured—for a toddler—in pictures released Sunday.

His sleeveless sweater features Coldstream Guardsmen in bearskin hats and red tunics. The outfit was completed by black knee socks and shoes.

His fashion choice prompted the Sundayx Times to call him, "Mummy's Little Soldier Prince." The Sunday Express chimed in with "Little Prince Charming."

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have released the images of the third in line to the throne ahead of Christmas. The release is being seen as a `thank you' note of sorts to Britain's vivacious media, which have so far allowed George to grow up largely free from intrusions.

South African woman named Miss World 2014

LONDON (AP)—South Africa's Rolene Strauss has been named the winner of the Miss World 2014 competition in a London finale televised in many parts of the world.

Edina Kulcsar of Hungary was the runner-up and Elizabeth Safrit of the United States took third place.

The winners were announced Sunday after a lengthy competition involving contestants from more than 120 countries.

Each had won the right to represent their country in a series of local and regional competitions.

This year's contest was marred by the murder last month of Miss Honduras and her sister in that country.

The first Miss World contest was held 63 years ago in Britain.

AP

Miss South Africa, Rolene Strauss, is crowned Miss World 2014 at the final, on stage at the Excel centre in east London, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014.

R&B star Jeremih charged after airport incident

NEWARK, N.J. (AP)—R&B star Jeremih and two others face charges in New Jersey after one of the men allegedly opened a door to a boarding ramp at Newark International Airport after it had been closed to prepare for takeoff.

Port Authority police say a member of the 27-year-old "Don't Tell `Em" singer's party tried opening the door Friday in an attempt to get his tardy fellow travelers on board the Phoenix-bound flight.

Jeremih, who police identified as Jeremy Felton, was charged with disorderly conduct and obstruction of administration of law. A second man faces the same charges while a third is charged with defiant trespass for allegedly opening the door.

A spokesman for Port Authority police says all three men were released without incident and ordered to appear before a judge.

An email to a representative at his label, Def Jam, was not immediately returned.

Novel by Nobel laureate Modiano set for US in 2015

NEW YORK (AP)—A recent work of fiction by Nobel laureate Patrick Modiano will be published in the U.S. late next year.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt announced Sunday that it has acquired "So You Don't Get Lost in the Neighborhood" ("Pour que tu ne te perdes pas dans le quartier"). The publisher calls it a "haunting novel of suspense" set, like much of Modiano's work, in Paris.

The book came out in France this fall.

Modiano was awarded the Nobel prize last fall, and his work is gradually receiving more exposure. His other books available in English include a collection of novellas, "Suspended Sentences," the novel "Honeymoon" and the Holocaust story "Dora Bruder."

The 69-year-old delivered his Nobel lecture last week in Stockholm.

Vigilant mother is devastated by news of son's molestation

DEAR ABBY: I'm so upset. I just found out my son was molested by one of his older cousins. "Ryan" didn't want me to know because he was afraid of how I would react. Ryan is 19 and a very private person. I want to confront the person who did this to him and press charges.

What's upsetting is I tried hard to protect my children. I thought I was doing everything right by having my boys let their friends come and spend the night at my home instead of letting them stay at their friends' homes.

I want Ryan to go to counseling to understand he did nothing wrong, that it wasn't his fault. Please help me to help my son. I partly blame myself for not knowing.

How did I let this happen? I am their mother. I am supposed to keep them safe. Please tell me what to do.

CONFUSED MOTHER IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR MOTHER: Stay calm and understand that you have done nothing wrong. This is no reflection upon you as a parent. While many people still believe that child molesters are creepy strangers who prey on little kids, the truth is the majority turn out to be family members or close friends one would never suspect.

Your son may be embarrassed or blame himself for what his cousin did. Reassure him that when someone older acts out against a younger one as his cousin did, that is "coercion"—an imbalance of power and experience. Explain that it would be beneficial for him to talk to a therapist. It might also benefit the cousin to do so because he may need to learn about boundaries.

Whether the cousin can be arrested or prosecuted may depend upon how long ago this occurred, and how old the kids were at the time it happened.

DEAR ABBY: I feel like I am not appreciated at my husband's family's holiday gatherings. Everyone brings a dish, while I get assigned the "leftover" -- which is usually a salad. I told my husband I wanted to bring the dessert one year, so I made a homemade pie. His sister proceeded to bring two store-bought pies in addition to her dish. No one ate any of my pie except for my husband and me. Even when I bring the salad, no one eats it, either.

I may not be the best cook, but I am a good one and my pie was perfect. Because this has happened more than once, I feel discouraged about contributing, and I have told that to my husband. Do you have any advice about how I can contribute without feeling left out?

NO NAME, PLEASE, IN MISSOURI

DEAR NO NAME: Yes. Understand that when families gather for holiday dinners year after year, they often want particular foods prepared in the way to which they are accustomed. While you may want to contribute, you may not be able to do that unless you are hosting the party.

From now on, unless you are asked to do otherwise, bring with you only a smile, your appetite, and flowers or a bottle of wine. If you do, there will be fewer hurt feelings and you'll save yourself some work.

TO MY JEWISH READERS: The eight days of Hanukkah begin at sundown. Happy Hanukkah, everyone! May we all enjoy a joyous festival of lights.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

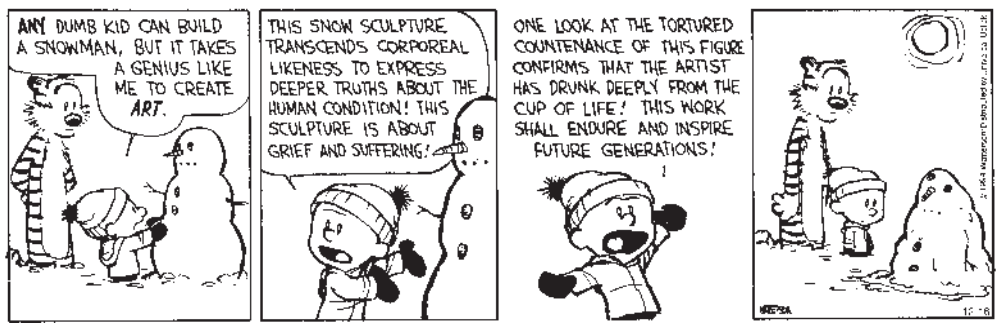
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


ANY DUMB KID CAN BUILD A SNOWMAN, BUT IT TAKES A GENIUS LIKE ME TO CREATE ART.
THIS SNOW SCULPTURE TRANSCENDS CORPOREAL LIKENESS TO EXPRESS DEEPER TRUTHS ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION! THIS SCULPTURE IS ABOUT GRIEF AND SUFFERING!
ONE LOOK AT THE TORTURED COUNTENANCE OF THIS FIGURE CONFIRMS THAT THE ARTIST HAS DRUNK DEEPLY FROM THE CUP OF LIFE! THIS WORK SHALL ENDURE AND INSPIRE FUTURE GENERATIONS!

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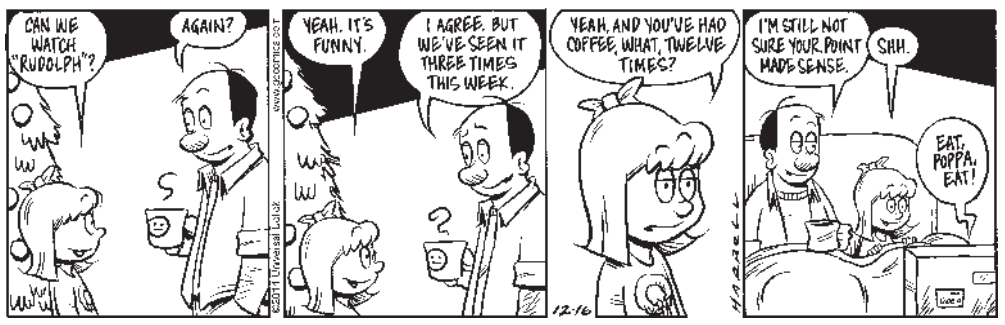
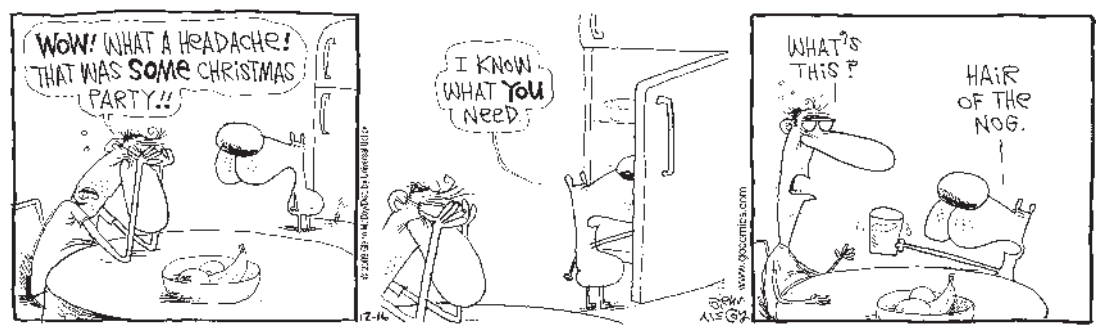
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


CAN WE WATCH "RUDOLPH"?
AGAIN?
YEAH. IT'S FUNNY.
I AGREE. BUT WE'VE SEEN IT THREE TIMES THIS WEEK.
YEAH, AND YOU'VE HAD COFFEE, WHAT, TWELVE TIMES?
I'M STILL NOT SURE YOUR POINT MADE SENSE.
SHH.
EAT, POPPA, EAT!

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

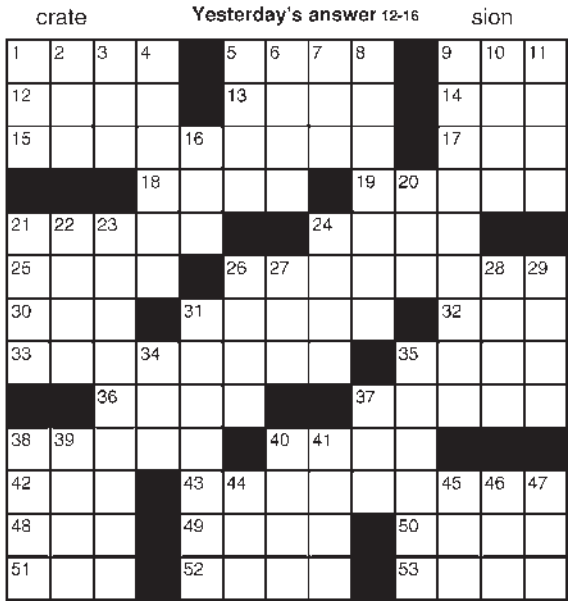
ACROSS
1 Touch
5 Capri, e.g.
9 Started
12 Long tale
13 October stone
14 Barcelona bear
15 Radio type
17 Siesta
18 Counterfeit
19 Fashion magazine
21 Worth
24 Frau's hubby
25 Hollywood clashers
26 Items often tossed at play
30 Sister
31 Discussions
32 Ultramodern
33 1960s head of France
35 On in years
36 Discard
37 Consecrate
38 Heard the alarm clock
40 Cold cuts purveyor
42 "Go, team!"
43 Crisp, sweetened biscuit
48 Hostel
49 Greek vowel
50 Press
51 Billboards
52 "Untouchable" Eliot
53 Alkali neutralizer

DOWN
1 Fool
2 "Humbug!"
3 Actor Tognazzi
4 Home of the apostle Paul
5 Hawk-eyes' home
6 Unwanted email
7 Privy, for short
8 Football teams
9 Fit for distances
10 Birthright barterer
11 Narcs' evidence
16 Commonest word
20 Sphere
21 Sell
22 Chills and fever
23 Warm underwear
24 Cod relative
26 Pitcher's goof
27 Right angle
28 The Bee — 29 Turfs
31 Sets a radio dial
34 Diving bird
35 Keys or Silverstone
37 Diner order
38 Met melody
39 Potter's stick
40 They're often connected
41 Historic times
44 Weeding tool
45 Joan of —
46 Pond carp
47 Conclusion

Solution time: 22 mins.

O	L	D	S	■	A	P	E	■	A	O	N	E
D	I	A	L	E	C	T	S	■	U	P	O	N
D	E	M	O	C	R	A	T	■	T	E	N	D
■	■	■	T	H	F	■	F	D	U	C	E	S
A	L	T	H	O	■	T	E	R	M	■	■	■
B	O	A	S	■	D	E	M	A	N	D	S	■
C	A	P	■	R	E	N	E	W	■	O	A	F
■	D	E	M	I	G	O	D	■	D	O	L	L
■	■	■	E	A	R	N	■	P	A	R	T	Y
M	A	L	A	L	A	■	A	I	M	■	■	■
I	C	O	N	■	D	E	M	E	A	N	O	R
D	E	L	I	■	E	M	I	S	S	A	R	Y
I	S	L	E	■	D	U	D	■	K	N	E	E

Yesterday's answer 12-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hallee Hirsh, 27; Krysten Ritter, 33; Benjamin Bratt, 51; Sam Robards, 53.

Happy Birthday: Avoid mistakes this year by slowing down and following the rules. You can make headway, but only if you are not impulsive. Hard work, dedication and using your imagination to outmaneuver any competition you meet along the way will be vital if you want to excel. Opportunities are heading your way, so make the most of them and savor the moment. Your numbers are 7, 12, 21, 24, 32, 38, 40.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Don't jump to conclusions regarding your status personally or professionally. Be willing to compromise and you will find a way to make everyone happy. Put more passion into important partnerships and you will get a good return. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Listen, observe and ask questions. Don't let temptation lead you astray. Moderation and sticking to a simple workable plan is your best bet. Love is in the stars, and romance will enhance your personal life. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Find a solution or a way to help others and you will gain valuable experience. An energetic approach to work or helping your peers will pay off. Don't make an impulsive purchase or investment. Take your time and stick to a budget. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Avoid situations that are compromising. You will face difficulties if you let your emotions lead to presumptuous actions. Take a step back from whatever situation you face and look for alternate ways to move forward. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Take a bold approach and go after what you want with strength and courage. You can make positive changes if you are persistent but patient. Execute your plans with precision and timing. Don't mix business with pleasure. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep close tabs on your domestic situation. Make sure the changes taking place are mutual amongst those who will be affected. Love is on the rise, but don't feel you have to buy someone's affection or attention. Honesty is your best bet. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Erratic behavior will not help you get the results you are looking for. Focus on communication and sharing your thoughts and feelings. Once you open up a dialogue, you will discover who will be helpful and who will not. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Keep your secrets in a safe place. You don't want anyone to have the upper hand or be able to outsmart you when it comes to work. Focus on what's trendy and use your intelligence and imagination to outsmart the competition. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Shoot for the stars. Be progressive and aggressive in your pursuits. The changes you make will be accepted as long as you have your strategy in place. An emotional matter will bring about a positive alteration to the way you live. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Keep a low profile. If you work quietly behind the scenes, you will get ahead, giving you greater flexibility to enjoy the end-of-year festivities. Don't worry about the changes going on around you. Stick to your game plan. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Push your ideas forward. You will feel better knowing you will reach your goals and complete what needs to be done before the end of the year. Make suggestions, but don't do the work unless you are offered something in return. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Say as little as possible and don't make unrealistic promises. Take action and do what's expected of you and more. You should focus on getting along with others and making personal improvements that will help you advance. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are an adventurer, a free-thinker and a doer. You are imaginative.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			2		1		6	
	2							8
		1		9		4		
8			9		4			1
		6		5		7		
1			8		3			2
		9		2		3		
3							4	
	7		4		6			

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/16

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	5	1	3	9	4	8	2	6
2	8	3	6	1	7	9	5	4
4	9	6	5	2	8	1	3	7
5	2	4	9	6	1	3	7	8
8	6	9	7	3	5	2	4	1
3	1	7	8	4	2	6	9	5
1	3	2	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	7	5	1	8	3	4	6	2
6	4	8	2	7	9	5	1	3

Difficulty Level ★ 12/15

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

HANUKKAH TRADITIONS Solution: 7 letters

S	L	H	A	R	O	T	C	E	P	T	L	E	G	L
E	E	A	Y	E	N	O	H	R	M	M	U	S	I	C
L	D	D	E	D	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	G	F	S
D	I	I	A	N	M	I	T	Z	V	A	H	F	T	T
N	E	M	S	M	S	O	N	G	S	T	A	H	S	U
A	R	A	R	E	U	R	A	T	S	M	G	O	E	N
C	D	M	E	K	O	O	C	E	I	I	T	L	R	O
H	C	T	Y	A	L	P	K	L	N	F	R	I	U	D
E	H	E	A	E	N	A	Y	U	I	Z	E	D	Z	O
E	I	M	R	K	B	O	S	L	O	E	S	A	T	O
S	L	P	P	(T)	R	Y	L	O	H	L	S	Y	Z	F
E	D	L	(A)	Z	A	I	R	H	A	E	E	G	O	E
V	R	(E)	O	D	N	A	B	E	S	B	D	A	A	A
I	E	T	H	G	I	E	M	H	L	I	O	M	M	S
G	N	O	Z	A	M	A	H	A	K	A	D	E	Z	T

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Amidah, Bake, Birkat, Candles, Cheese, Children, Coins, Cook, Days, Dedication, Dessert, Dish, Donuts, Dreidel, Eat, Eight, Family, Feast, Filling, Food, Game, Gelt, Gifts, Give, Hamazon, Holiday, Holy, Home, Honey, Lights, Loukoumades, Maoz Tzur, Meals, Mitzvah, Music, Nights, Oil, Play, Praise, Prayers, Rest, Songs, Star, Temple, Torah, Tzedakah, Zelebi, Zot

Yesterday's Answer: Croissant

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 35, 37, 38, 39, 40 or 41,** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. (Contains 43 puzzles.)

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Saipan Tribune

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Let's GO Tour Company is a new company on Saipan that specializes in offering unique day tours on the island. Our company is one of the first in the region to introduce the latest models of the Polaris RZR's all-terrain "side by side" vehicles that will take tourists on several breath-taking tours on Saipan. We are inviting qualified U.S. workers to apply for the position of:

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Interested applicants may send their applications to lt_recruitment@tanholdings.com. To be considered, applications must be submitted not later than December 17, 2014. Applications for Employment are available at the Human Resources Department located at the 2nd floor of the JP Center Building along Beach Road or at the Century Tours office at Kanoa Resort. Pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

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Sick Manning leads Broncos to AFC West title

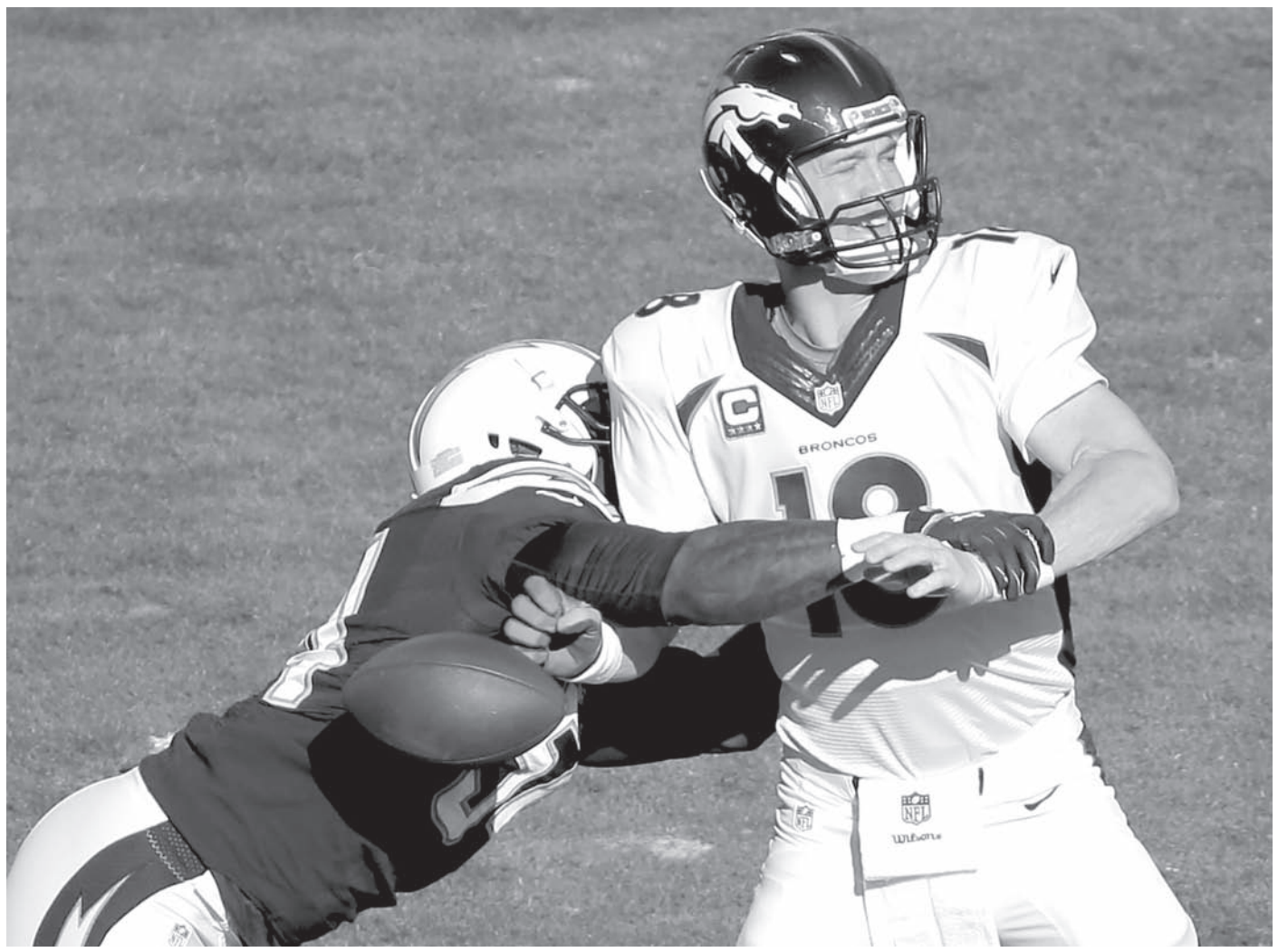
SAN DIEGO (AP)—Peyton Manning was sick and sore.

He took four bags of intravenous fluid between Saturday night and Sunday morning, and then hurt his right thigh in the second quarter, requiring more treatment.

It was all good, though. Nothing a victory and a fourth straight AFC West title won't cure.

Manning threw a 28-yard touchdown pass to Demaryius Thomas in the third quarter and Connor Barth kicked five field goals to lead Denver to a 22-10 victory against the San Diego Chargers on Sunday that clinched the division title.

"He was sick. I don't think it was Jordan game flu sick, but he was sick," running back C.J. Anderson said, referring to how sick Michael Jordan was when he scored 38 points in Game 5 of the 1997 NBA Finals.



Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning, right, drops the ball as he is sacked by San Diego Chargers outside linebacker Melvin Ingram during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014, in San Diego.

Bengals 30, Browns 0

In Cleveland, Johnny Manziel spent his first NFL start being chased and taunted by Cincinnati defenders as the Bengals rudely welcomed the hyped rookie quarterback to the league with a 30-0 demolition of the Cleveland Browns on Sunday.

Manziel failed to live up to the overwhelming buildup surrounding his debut as the AFC North-leading Bengals (9-4-1) built a 20-point halftime lead and rolled to their fourth straight road win.

Bengals rookie Jeremy Hill rushed for 148 yards and two touchdowns, backing up his postgame trash talk of the Browns following a loss to them last month.

Manziel, promoted over the slumping Brian Hoyer to spark the Browns (7-7), finished 10 of 18 for 80 yards and two interceptions.

Patriots 41, Dolphins 13

In Foxborough, New England clinched the AFC East title for the sixth straight season as Tom Brady threw two touchdown passes in a big third quarter.

Leading 14-13 at halftime, the Patriots scored on four consecutive series while piling up 24 points, the most in any third period in team history.

New England (11-3) can secure home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs by beating the New York Jets and Buffalo Bills. Miami (7-7) saw its slim postseason hopes dwindle further.

The Dolphins cut the lead to one point at halftime on Ryan Tannehill's 32-yard touchdown pass to Mike Wallace.

Colts 17, Texans 10

In Indianapolis, Andrew Luck threw two touchdown passes as the Colts won their second straight AFC South title.

Indianapolis (10-4) has won four straight.

It sure wasn't easy. Luck was 18 of 34 with 187 yards and one interception on the same day Reggie Wayne passed Peyton Manning for the most games and wins in franchise history. Wayne has played in 209 games, winning 142.

Houston (7-7) lost starting quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick with a left leg injury in the second quarter. Rookie Tom Savage replaced Fitzpatrick and was ineffective, going 10 of 19 for 127 yards.

Seahawks 17, 49ers 7

In Seattle, Marshawn Lynch rushed for 91 yards and a touchdown, and Russell Wilson threw a touchdown pass to rookie Paul Richardson, as the Seahawks knocked archrival San Francisco from playoff contention.

The defending Super Bowl champions remained in contention for a division title and No. 1 seed in the NFC.

After a sluggish, sloppy first half, Seattle (10-4) awoke in the final 30 minutes behind the running of Lynch and a defense that shut out the 49ers, holding them to 67 yards. Colin Kaepernick was sacked six times and the 49ers didn't run a play past the Seattle 38 in the second half.

Cowboys 38, Eagles 27

In Philadelphia, Dez Bryant caught a career-best three touchdown catches from Tony Romo as Dallas rallied to beat Philadelphia after wasting a 21-0 lead.

DeMarco Murray had a pair of TD runs to help the Cowboys (10-4) move ahead of the Eagles (9-5) into first place in the NFC East. The Eagles dominated the Cowboys in a 33-10 road win on Thanksgiving, but Dallas takes control of the division with two weeks left.

The Cowboys jumped to a 21-0 lead early in the second quarter before Philadelphia rallied behind Mark Sanchez.

Chris Polk had TD runs of 1 and 5 yards and Darren Sproles ran in from the 1 to give the Eagles a 24-21 lead late in third quarter. But Romo and the Cowboys answered quickly with two touchdowns in a span of 2:51.

Lions 16, Vikings 14

In Detroit, Matt Prater's 33-yard field goal with 3:38 remaining lifted Detroit into a tie for first place in the NFC North.

The Lions (10-4) are now even atop the division with Green Bay, which lost to Buffalo earlier in the day, but Detroit didn't have an easy time, spotting the Vikings (6-8) a 14-0 lead before a pair of second-quarter interceptions helped the Lions start their rally.

Even at the end, Detroit had to sweat out a 68-yard field goal attempt by Minnesota's Blair Walsh on the game's final play. The kick was short.

Bills 31, Packers 13

In Orchard Park, Bacarri Rambo intercepted two Aaron Rodgers passes and Marcus Thigpen scored on a 75-yard punt return.

Defensive end Mario Williams also forced Rodgers to fumble, which led to running back Eddie Lacy being tackled in the end zone for a safety with 1:51 left. Dan Carpenter hit all three field goal attempts, including a 51-yarder in the second half to help keep Buffalo (8-6) in the AFC playoff picture.

The Bills were also have their first eight-win season since going 9-7 in 2004.

The Packers (10-4) had a five-game win streak snapped, blowing an opportunity to get closer to their sixth consecutive playoff berth.

Rodgers finished 17 of 42 for 185 yards, and two interceptions.

Steelers 27, Falcons 20

In Atlanta, Ben Roethlisberger threw for 360 yards and William Gay returned an interception for a touchdown as the Steelers (9-5) remained a half-game behind Cincinnati in the AFC North with their second straight win.

The Falcons (5-9) ensured themselves of a losing season and slipped out of first place in the NFC South.

Pittsburgh led 13-0 after Gay picked off Matt Ryan's pass over the middle on the first play of the second quarter, returning it 52 yards. The Steelers extended the lead to 27-13 with Le'Veon Bell's 1-yard run in the opening minute of the fourth period.

The Falcons made a game of it, pulling within a touchdown on Ryan's 4-yard pass to Roddy White. But the Steelers clinched the victory with their final possession, converting twice on third down to run out the clock.

Ravens 20, Jaguars 12

In Baltimore, the Ravens sacked rookie Blake Bortles eight times and returned a blocked punt for a touchdown.

Baltimore (9-5) gained only 31 yards rushing through three quarters and scored just once with its offense on the field. But the defense was solid, and special teams helped the Ravens stay in the thick of the AFC playoff chase.

Terrell Suggs was credited with 2 1/2 sacks and rookie Timmy Jernigan, starting for the suspended Haloti Ngata, had two.

Jacksonville (2-12) tried just about everything in its bid to pull off an upset, including an onside kick and a fake punt. Both worked, but it wasn't enough to earn the Jaguars their first win on the road.

Panthers 19, Buccaneers 17

In Charlotte, Derek Anderson threw for 277 yards and a touchdown, Graham Gano kicked four field goals and the Panthers improved their chances in the NFC South playoff race.

The win, coupled with Atlanta's loss to Pittsburgh, put the Panthers percentage points in first place ahead of New Orleans in the division. The Saints (5-8) play at Chicago on Monday night.

Anderson was 25 of 40 and improved to 2-0 as a starter in place of Cam Newton, sidelined while recovering from a car accident Tuesday that left him with two fractures in his lower back.

Chiefs 31, Raiders 13

In Kansas City, Alex Smith threw for 297 yards and two scores, while Kansas City shut down Derek Carr and the Oakland offense.

Knile Davis had touchdowns running and receiving, and De'Anthony Thomas returned a punt 81 yards for another score as the Chiefs (8-6) got even for a 24-20 loss to Oakland (2-12) last month.

The Chiefs led 10-6 early in the third quarter before scoring three touchdowns in 4 minutes, 42 seconds. The last was a 70-yard throw from Smith to Davis, who had taken over the majority of running back duties after Jamaal Charles took a shot to the head.

Charles passed concussion testing and returned briefly to the game.

Carr finished 27 of 56 for 222 yards, throwing a TD pass in the final minute. The Raiders' rookie also was sacked four times and fumbled a snap that led to a Kansas City touchdown.

Giants 24, Redskins 13

In East Rutherford, Eli Manning threw three touchdown passes to rookie Odell Beckham Jr. and the Giants took advantage of an overturned touchdown at the end of the half.

Manning and Beckham combined 12 times for 143 yards, with touchdown passes covering 10, 35 and 6 yards. The win was the second straight for the Giants (5-9) after seven consecutive losses.

The Redskins (3-11) blew a touchdown and command of the game on a fumble by Robert Griffin III as time expired at the end of the first half. Griffin scrambled for an apparent 8-yard touchdown for a 17-7 lead, diving over the pylon, then running on to the field and spiking the ball with emphasis.

A video review by referee Jeff Triplette determined that Griffin lost control of the ball diving over the pylon and the play was ruled a touchback.

The call incensed veteran Redskins receiver Santana Moss so much that he bumped an official while arguing and was ejected. Instead of a 10-point lead, the Redskins led 10-7.

Jets 16, Titans 11

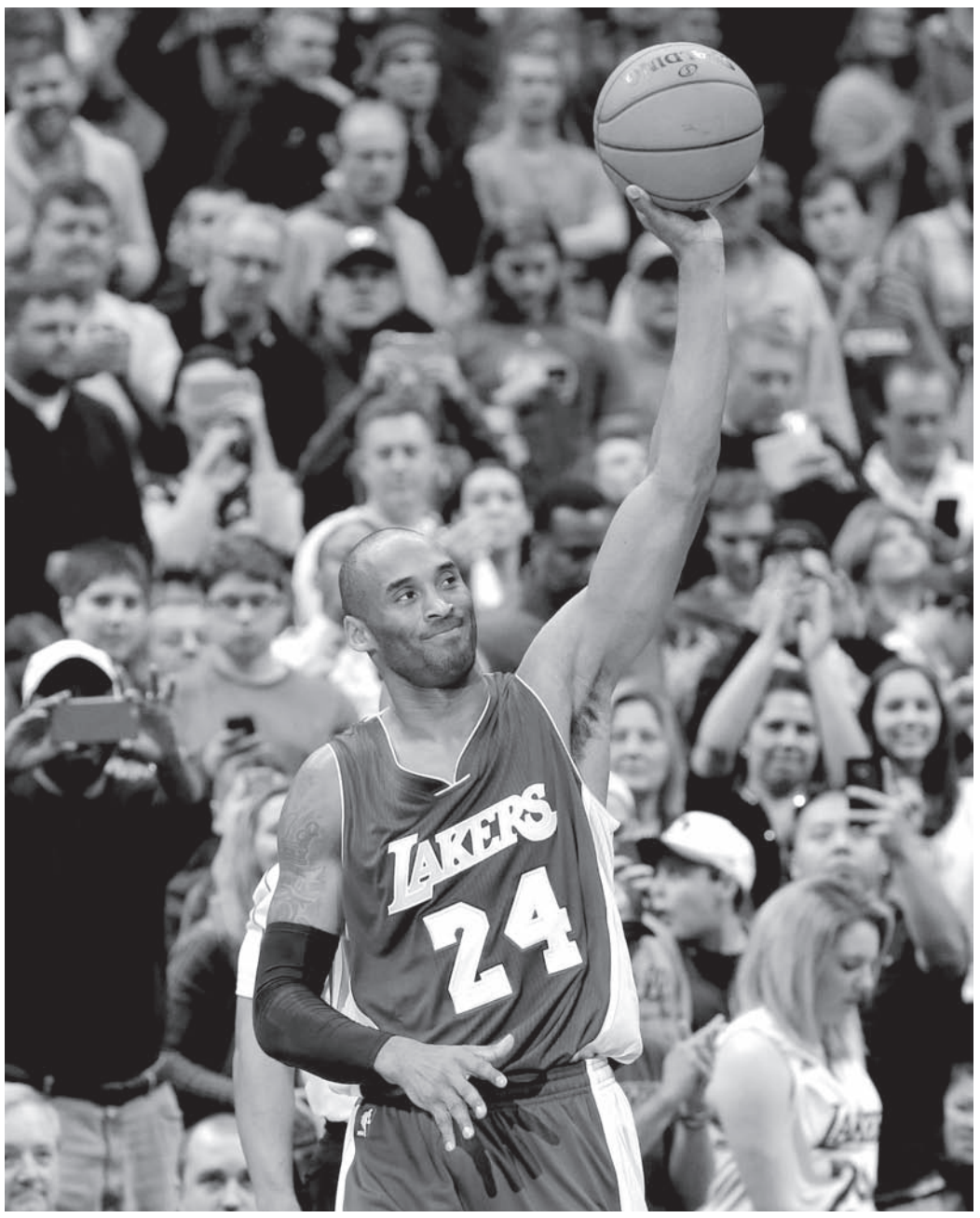
In Nashville, Chris Ivory scored on a 1-yard touchdown run with 3:09 left in a game marked by a brawl between teams playing only for pride, with the loser hoping for better draft position.

The Jets (3-11) got their first road win this season in the first NFL game to end with a 16-11 score. They also snapped a three-game skid.

Geno Smith threw for 179 yards and a TD. He also was apparently hit by Titans defensive tackle Jurrell Casey, starting a brawl in the third quarter. Casey was flagged, but not ejected.

The Titans (2-12) now have lost eight straight and 11 of 12 in their worst skid since 1994 when home was in Houston. They got the ball twice late, and reached the Jets 9 after three laterals on the final play came up short.

Kobe surpasses Jordan on scoring list



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (24) holds up the ball and acknowledges the crowd during the second quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Minnesota Timberwolves after passing Michael Jordan on the NBA all-time scoring list in Minneapolis, Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Kobe Bryant has shot more than 11,000 free throws in his NBA career. He has been at the line in critical moments with championships hanging in the balance.

Still, when he stepped to the line midway through the second quarter of a December game against the lowly Minnesota Timberwolves, the weight of Air sat on his shoulders. And it was heavy.

"You get up there and the crowd's really waiting to see you score nine points, so don't (screw) this up and completely kill the moment," Bryant thought as he prepared to move past Michael Jordan on the NBA's career scoring list.

Bryant scored 26 points in the game, vaulting him past Jordan for third in league history and leading the Los Angeles Lakers to a 100-94 victory Sunday night.

Bryant needed nine points to pass Jordan and, after missing four of his first five shots, he knocked down a pair of free throws with 5:24 to play in the first half to join Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Karl Malone on the NBA's career scoring podium. Bryant shot 7 for 20m but scored 10 in the final five minutes and hit a 3-pointer with just over a minute to play that helped seal the victory.

"I congratulate Kobe on reaching this milestone," Jordan, the owner of the Charlotte Hornets, said in a statement given to The Associated Press. "He's obviously a great player, with a strong work ethic and has an equally strong passion for the game of basketball. I've enjoyed watching his game evolve over the years, and I look forward to seeing what he accomplishes next."

Magic Johnson also posted his congratulations on Twitter and said Bryant was a top-five player in league history.

"That's the most important thing to me, is playing for the respect of the greats and feeling like I'm a part of that culture and a part of that brotherhood," Bryant said.

Shabazz Muhammad had 28 points and nine rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (38,387) and Karl Malone (36,928) have scored more points than Bryant.

The Timberwolves stopped the game and owner Glen Taylor presented Bryant with the game ball, but what made the night even sweeter was Bryant's dagger with the shot clock winding down and Andrew Wiggins - Minnesota's 19-year-old rookie and the No. 1 overall draft pick - right in his face. It gave the Lakers a 97-94 lead with 1:02 to play, and the Lakers closed it out at the line.

"I witnessed greatness tonight," Wiggins said. "A living legend passed Michael Jordan, who everyone thinks is the best player of all-time. That's a big accomplishment. I'm glad I was there to witness it."

Bryant has spent the past 18 years measuring himself against, and being compared to, the man widely considered the best to ever play the game. Jordan shot a higher field goal percentage, won six titles to the five that Bryant has now and climbed past Wilt Chamberlain into third on the list in 1,039 games to Bryant's 1,269.

Bryant reached the milestone in Minneapolis, the place the Lakers called home for their first 12 seasons until moving to LA in 1960. As usual, there were purple-and-gold clad fans all over the Target Center, and they gave Bryant a rousing standing ovation when he knocked down the two free throws just past the midpoint of the second quarter to give him 32,293 career points.

He exchanged hugs with teammates and several Timberwolves, a few of whom were just 1 year old when Bryant entered the league straight out of high school in 1996. He was serenaded with "Kobe! Kobe!" chants as he left the court and a huge crowd gathered around the Lakers bus outside the arena to cheer for him.

"It was different," Bryant said. "I'm so used to being the villain all the time on the road it took a minute to kind of adjust. It felt good to be appreciated like that."

SIDEBAR

Parker-less Spurs bounce back, top Nuggets

DENVER (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 18 points and the San Antonio beat the banged-up Denver Nuggets 99-91 on Sunday night.

Tim Duncan and Manu Ginobili added 15 points apiece for the Spurs, who bounced back from Friday's loss to the Los Angeles Lakers despite the absence of Tony Parker, who was out with an injured hamstring.

Arron Afflalo had a season-high 31 points to lead the Nuggets, who have lost six of their last seven games.

J.J. Hickson started in place of injured Kenneth Faried and Ty Lawson left the game with 3:02 remaining in the second quarter after a collision with Ginobili opened a cut above his left eye. The cut was bandaged and he returned early in the third quarter.

Down by 10 points heading into the fourth quarter, the Nuggets pulled to 79-74 on a baseline jumper by Afflalo with 5:42 remaining.

The teams were trading baskets until Ginobili hit a 3-pointer and Cory Joseph drove in for a reverse layup off a Nuggets turnover as San Antonio went in front 94-84 with 2 minutes to play and Denver couldn't get back within striking distance.

Ahead by four points midway through the second quarter, Joseph's fastbreak started an 8-0 run that carried San Antonio to a 41-29 advantage. The Nuggets pulled to 41-34 on a 3-pointer by Wilson Chandler but the Spurs scored the final four points of the quarter, including a 3-pointer by Joseph to go in front 45-34 at the half.

Thunder 112, Suns 88

In Oklahoma City, Russell Westbrook had 28 points, eight assists and eight rebounds, and Kevin Durant added 23 points and eight rebounds as Oklahoma City won its sixth straight game, beating Phoenix Suns 112-88.

Westbrook recorded his eighth straight game of scoring at least 20 points, and getting five rebounds and five assists since his return from a broken hand. By halftime, he had 24, five rebounds and six assists. He narrowly missed getting his ninth career triple-double.

With the win, Oklahoma City - which started the season 3-12 - moved within a half-game of eighth place in the Western Conference. The Thunder, with Westbrook and Durant back after missing most or all of the first part of the season due to injury, has won eight of their last nine games and is 11-13.

Gerald Green led Phoenix with 15 points. The Suns have lost five straight games to fall to 12-13.

Lakers 100, Timberwolves 94

In Minneapolis, Kobe Bryant passed Michael Jordan for third place on the NBA scoring list and had 10 points in the final five minutes to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 100-94 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Sunday night.

Bryant needed nine points to move past Jordan and, after missing four of his first five shots, he knocked down a pair of free throws with 5:24 to play in the first half to join Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Karl Malone on the NBA's career scoring podium. Bryant finished with 26 points on 7-for-20 shooting and hit a 3-pointer with just over a minute to play that helped seal the victory.

Shabazz Muhammad had 28 points and nine rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Warriors 128, Pelicans 122 OT

In New Orleans, Stephen Curry scored eight of his 34 points in overtime as Golden State won its 16th straight by beating New Orleans.

Klay Thompson added 29 points for the Warriors, whose franchise-long winning streak includes a club-record 10 straight road victories.

Tyreke Evans scored 34 points for the Pelicans, but fouled out with three minutes left in overtime.

Jrue Holiday had 30 points, nine assists and five steals for New Orleans, which was playing without Anthony Davis but still led 107-99 with 4:16 left in regulation.

Andre Iguodala had a season-high 20 points and Shaun Livingston scored 12 for Golden State. Marreese Speights added 10 points, including a free throw that tied the game at 111, a scored that held until regulation ended.

Wizards 93, Jazz 84

In Washington, John Wall had 16 points, eight assists and six rebounds, as Washington overcame a sluggish start to put away slumping Utah.

Wall also had five steals and three blocks, Bradley Beal scored 22 points, and Paul Pierce added 15 for the Wizards, who nearly succumbed to a letdown game after their big win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Friday night. Washington committed 12 first-half turnovers against the Jazz, but Wall, Beal and Nene led a third-quarter surge, and Andre Miller's driving layup in the first minute of the fourth quarter produced the game's first double-digit lead.

Alec Burks scored 19 points, and Gordon Hayward had 16 for the Jazz, who have lost 11 of 12.

The Wizards have won four straight — the longest current winning streak in the Eastern Conference—and seven of eight.

Bulls 93, Heat 75

In Miami, Mike Dunleavy scored 22 points as Chicago overcame a sloppy start to beat offensively inept Miami.

Heat leading scorer Chris Bosh (calf strain) missed a game for the first time this season, which left them without enough punch or size to challenge Chicago. Miami shot a season-low 35 percent, including 4 for 22 from 3-point range.

Dunleavy was shut out in the first half but scored 19 points on eight shots in the third quarter, when Chicago outscored Miami 33-16. Dunleavy finished 4 for 5 from 3-point range, while the Bulls shot 9 of 18 beyond the arc and 47 overall.

Jimmy Butler had 17 points for the Central Division-leading Bulls. They improved to 11-3 on the road, best in the Eastern Conference.

Dwyane Wade and Luol Deng led Miami with 17 points apiece. The Heat's point total matched their season low.

Raptors 95, Knicks 90

In New York, Kyle Lowry had 21 points and 11 assists, controlling the overtime period and leading the Toronto Raptors to a 95-90 victory over the New York Knicks on Sunday night.

Lowry missed a jumper that would've won it to end regulation, but then had two baskets and an assist in overtime, accounting for more points than the Knicks managed as a team.

Terrence Ross added a season-high 22 points for the Raptors, who maintained the best record in the Eastern Conference at 18-6.

Carmelo Anthony had 34 points and nine rebounds for the Knicks, who played without injured guards Iman Shumpert and J.R. Smith.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, third placer Raymond Zapanta, first finisher Ador Dimaano, and second placer Tony Verdaguer pose for a photo during the brief awards ceremony for the December roll-offs last weekend at the Saipan Bowling Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dianne Camacho is flanked by runners-up, Carrie Camacho, left, and Tess Fabie during the brief awards ceremony for the December roll-offs last weekend at the Saipan Bowling Center.

First win for Ador; fifth for Dianne

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Ador Dimaano earned his first monthly crown, while Dianne Camacho clinched her fifth as the two veteran bowlers ruled the December roll-offs for the King and Queen of the Lanes held over the weekend at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Dimaano competed in both days of the December tournament, but nobody came close to beating his final-day tally of 816 pinfalls, giving him the win in the last roll-off for this year and a spot in the finals set next month.

He had a roller coaster four-game series of 154, 259, 177 and 226 in Day 1 for the 816 toal and 204 average, which gave him a 39-pin advantage over his closest pursuer Tony Verdaguer, who finished with 777.

Dimaano, who also bowled on the first day but only finished with a subpar 662—129, 187, 147 and 199—pocketed the $90 top prize and a ticket to the season-ending tournament next month.

Verdaguer only competed last Sunday and had a four-game series of 190, 196, 168 and 223 for a 194.25 average that earned him $40. Former CNMI youth bowler Raymond Zapanta came in at third with 766—186, 164, 214, 202—good for $25.

In the women's division, Camacho, who is already assured of a spot in next month's Queen of the Lanes finals, topped the monthly roll-off for the fifth time this year with a 766 tally for an 82-pin victory over Tess Fabie's 684.

Camacho could not make it to the 200s in the first three games, tallying scores of 189, 171 and 165. She, however, saved the best for last and knocked down 241 pins for a 191.5 average to seal the win and get the $80 winner's purse.

It was Camacho's second back-to-back win after also ruling the monthly tournaments in June and July. She also topped the November and September roll-offs.

Fabie failed to match Camacho's performance as she could only muster 196, 158, 158 and 172—good enough for $35. She averaged 171 in the four-game series.

Camacho's daughter, Carrie, finished third overall with a 678—201, 175, 144, 158—for a 169.5 average and the $20 prize.

Finals cast in Bud Light Cup's 2 divisions set

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The finalists in the Fanihi and Flame Tree divisions of the 2014 Saipan Electronic Darts Association Bud Light Cup are now complete with the title matches to be played this Thursday at the various bars on island.

The Sand Juvy Put3ska and sister team No Fear will contest the Fanihi crown after dispatching separate opponents last week, while the Naked Fish Ridin' Darrty and the Jokers Warriors arranged their title showdown in the Flame Tree division.

Put3ska defeated the Smoke Pub 80 Proofers, 8-6, while No Fear pulled off an 8-4 decision against the VFW Warriors.

Renato Barros, Modie Zamora, Arvin Orense and Paul Quizon delivered the two wins in the last two doubles matches that Put3ska needed to seal the win after the Proofers evened things up at 6-6.

No Fear, meanwhile, banked on Frances Magofna, Clare Aldan, Philip Kalen, Hank Magofna and Sally Aguon in winning four of the last five events they played to secure the victory and earn the right to face Put3ska in the finals.

In the Flame Tree division, the Naked Fish Ridin' Darrty scored an 8-3 win over the Sand Juvy Dart Balas, while the Jokers Warriors escaped with an 8-5 triumph against Jonny's Kyodai to earn the two finals berths.

Meanwhile, the Jokers Spartans and Smoke Pub Snipers completed the quarterfinalists in the Chichirika division.

The Spartans and Snipers both needed an 8-5 tally against the Barcode Breakers and Disciples, respectively, to clinch the final two spots in the Last 8. They will face off in the quarterfinals, which starts tomorrow.

Poseidon Feelin' Lucky takes on Sand Juvy Ta'Chagi, VFW 'Ombak' Hit'em up clashes with Joe's DNA Jump It, and the Smoke Pub Bull It battles Blue Koi's in the other quarterfinals pairings.

The Smoke Pub D' Mekaniks nipped Route33 Mixblood Shooters, 8-7, while Marupok earned an 8-4 victory over the Jokers X-ecutioners to clinch the quarterfinals spots. They will collide in the Tuesday B division Last 8 that starts today.

Jokers Dabarkads duels Sand Juvy Snipers, the Smoke Pub High On Darts meets the Dartaholics, and the Oleai Team Fearless faces the Sparkz in the other quarterfinals matches.

SIS

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ville (2008), Saipan Community School (2009 and 2010), Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School (2011), WSR (2012), and Whispering Palms (2013).

Miyawaki's second and game-winning goal came under the 10-minute mark of the 20-minute second half and he got some "help" from WSR. The SIS forward attacked the Kingfishers' defense at the center and he stopped near the penalty area before kicking the ball against two defenders. The shot seemed a bit off to the left side (right side of the goalie) but it hit the foot of one WSR defender, who stepped into the play for help defense, and rolled into the left corner of the goal.

The Kingfishers, who got their lone goal from Ian Mariago, tried to answer back to equalize and had multiple opportunities, but just could not convert those attempts. The 2012 champion had its best chance to score and even up the match going into the last two minutes of the game when Sebastian Manabat rushed inside the penalty area after eluding a couple of defenders. However, SIS goalie Daniele Colombo was quick on his feet and ran into Manabat to deflect the shot and successfully got the ball.

After that big defensive stop, the Geckos just melted the clock to preserve the lead and hoist their first championship trophy after falling short last year. SIS lost to Whispering Palms in last season's finale, 0-1.

Bruce Berline and Mayling Colombo coached the champion squad, which also had Go Sekiguchi, Do Hyeon Kim, Matthew Berline, Jabez Sebastian, Patiphon Benchamkarn, Jung Woo Yoon, Brian Youn, Brandon Lee, Sean Gil, Hyun Jae Park, and Min Jin Cho on its roster.

The Geckos received the championship trophy from Northern Mariana Islands Football Association secretary general Ross Zapanta during the brief awarding ceremony. Zapanta also handed the Golden Boot and Golden Glove plums to Miyawaki and Colombo. Miyawaki collected 14 goals in the tournament.

Meanwhile, in the battle for third place, Koblerville Elementary School downed Dandan Middle School, 8-6.

WINNING

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Return of the Octagon more than seven years ago.

Camacho did not disappoint his numerous fans and showed the same old fighting form that made him one of the best MMA fighters Saipan has produced, winning over Kim via submission in the first round.

Fight fans eagerly awaiting Camacho's first fight on Saipan were treated to a mini-cultural show as the 25-year-old fighter, who is now based in Guam, veered away from the usual rap or pop song for an entrance song.

Instead , as an added drama, a group of youngsters danced and chanted in traditional Chamorro music to celebrate and honor Camacho's cultural roots and the show further fired up the hometown crowd.

When the fight started, the Korean challenger showed that he was no pushover and went toe-to-toe with Camacho for almost five minutes.

Kim, a number of times, pushed Camacho at the sides of the octagon where the former desperately tried to take down his opponent. Kim's attempts were unsuccessful as Camacho defended well, spreading his legs wide to thwart the takedown. The Korean is a known ground fighter whose style is similar to Greco-Roman and freestyle wrestlers pinning pins down opponents and forcing them to submission.

However, every time Kim was attempting to slam Camacho on the canvass, the latter retaliated by delivering punches to the side and ribcage of his opponent.

Camacho then landed one heavy blow that knocked the wind out of Kim and the Korean just curled up prompting the Trench Tech fighter to go for the kill. Camacho made sure the bell won't save Kim and ended the fight in 4:38 of the first round via submission on an arm-triangle choke.

"Kim is a very explosive fighter, a strong wrestler and is a known ground fighter. That's why my game plan was to end the fight right away. Who knows what might have happened if it went the full three rounds," said Camacho after the fight.

"That's why I kept on hitting him to slow him down and make him tired. A right shot to his back got him winded out so I went for the kill."

Meanwhile, 10 undercards were also featured in Trench Warz 18. Results of these matches will be reported in Saipan Tribune's Wednesday issue.

SONICS

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when he was fouled while pulling up for a baseline jumper. Mendoza left the game at the 8:43 mark and never came back, making it harder for the Ol'Aces to mount another comeback and easier for the Sonics to finish off their rival.

Karlo De Leon replaced the injured Mendoza and sank the two charities to move the Ol'Aces within six and a few possessions later the deficit was brought down to four, 50-54. Mendoza trooped to the foul line anew, but this time missed both free throws. Fortunately for the Ol'Aces, Ignacio Borja was there for the offensive rebound and the putback.

A De Guzman reverse layup on the other end gave the Sonics more breathing room, while Paul Mariano nailed a fastbreak layup after an Ol'Aces error to bring the lead back to 8, 58-50. The Sonics then flirted with a double-digit advantage, 61-52, after Espinosa answered Borja's drive with a left corner triple to beat the 24-second shot clock.

The Ol'Aces never recovered from thereon, as they clearly missed the leadership and offense of Mendoza. The Ol'Aces faltered in their comeback bid without Mendoza as they missed several important free throws and muffed easy shots. The Ol'Aces went only 3-for-10 from the foul line in the final half of the fourth quarter.

Aranda top-scored in the Sonics' title conquest, tallying 13, while De Guzman and Cadiang added 11 and 10, respectively. Mendoza still led the Ol'Aces despite missing majority of the fourth canto, as he scored 10 points, which LD Sanchez duplicated.

Meanwhile, Kagman Sparks outlasted Dream Team in overtime, 91-85, to bag the third place trophy.

Jason Lampkin and Allan Yu combined for 9 of Kagman's 10 points in the extra five minutes of the game to lift the Sparks to a podium finish. Lampkin registered Kagman's first 5 markers in the extension, while Yu drilled the last 4. Jesse Santos scored Kagman's other point.

Dream Team failed to complete a come-from-behind win after converting only one field goal in overtime off Richard Ada's triple. Dixon Kwon scored first for Dream Team in the extra frame with his split charity.

Lampkin paced Kagman with his 26 points, while Yu added 16. Shane Deleon Guerrero led all scorers with his 39 points, while Ada chipped in 27.

First Game

Kagman 91–Lampkin 26, Yu 20, Je. Santos 16, Malwelbug 8. Mettao 8, Jo. Santos 6, Palino 6.

Dream Team 85–S. Deleon Guerrero 39, Ada 27, Ito 8, Kwon 7, D. Deleon Guerrero 4.

Scoring by quarters: 16-12, 42-30, 56-51, 81-81, 91-85 (OT).

Second Game

Sonics 66–Aranda 13, De Guzman 11, Cadiang 10, Alegre 7, Mariano 6, J. Villanueva 5, Flores 4, Espinosa 3,Feria 2, Fidelino 1.

Ol'Aces 60– Mendoza 10, Sanchez 10, Borja 9, Tudela 8, De Leon 4, Yap 3, Darag 2, Francisco 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-12, 29-35, 49-46, 66-60.

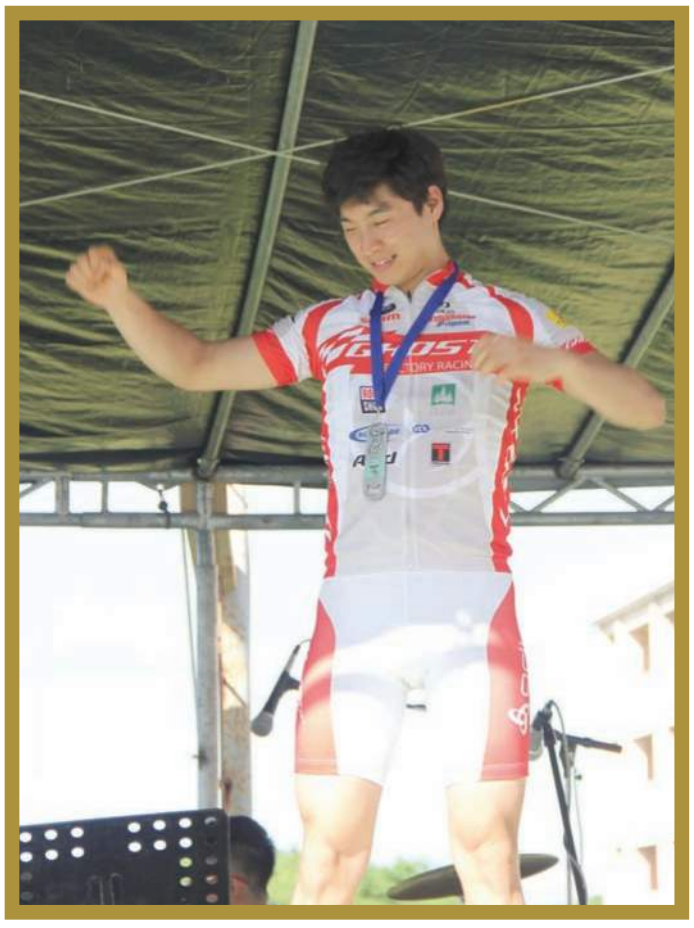
8th Hell of Marianas Awarding Ceremony

PHOTOS BY JON PEREZ

Hell of the Marianas race director Dino Manning thanks all the sponsors, volunteers, and riders who competed in the 8th Hell of Marianas century cycle race.

Saipan's Renato Calage, center, Paul Plunkett, left, and Manny Sitchon celebrate their 1-2-3 finish in the male 55-59 age division.

Saipan's Nap Dizon, center, is the male 35-39 division winner, relegating Rich Asuncion, left, and Michael Mattix to second and third, respectively.



Yong Yu gestures after topping the male 25-29 age group.

The Top 3 pro finishers, Konstantin Fast, center, Alexander Dorovskikh, left, and Ryutaro Nakamura, pose for a photo.

Male 14-19 age group top finisher and Guam's Justin Nieves, center, pose with runner-up and compatriot Jake Jones, left, and third placer Jerome Diyco of Saipan.

South Korean Kaon Cho vows to comeback for next year's XTERRA and Tagaman races on Saipan.

Open women's pro champion Mieko Carey, center, joins runner-up Kimiko McKagan, left, and third placer Lynn Mattix at the podium.

Guam's Patrick Camacho, center, joins compatriot Jeff Philips, left, and Saipan's Arjay Noriega during the awards presentation for the Top 3 finishers in the male 30-34 division.

From left, female 40-49 podium finishers Kanae Quinn of Saipan, Jonghwan Hwang of South Korea, and Margaret Rose pose for a photo.

Sick Manning leads Broncos to AFC West title

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Sports

Kobe surpasses Jordan on scoring list

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SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Saipan International School players and coaches pose with their trophies after beating William S. Reyes Elementary School in the finals of the 2014 NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League, 2-1, last Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

SIS takes first boys IFL title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan International School joined the elite circle of champions in the NMIFA U12 Interscholastic Football League, following a 2-1 win over William S. Reyes Elementary School in the 2014 season finale played last Saturday at the Hopwood Junior High School Field.

Rintaro Miyawaki canned the pair of goals that lifted the Geckos to the title win and put them in the company of past league champions Kobler-

See SIS on Page 26

Winning return for 'Crank'

JON PEREZ

Frank "The Crank" Camacho, left, delivers a punch to Jae Woong Kim's ribcage during their non-title bout in last Friday's Trench Warz 18: Rock & Rumble at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Frank "The Crank" Camacho had a triumphant return to the island where his mixed martial arts career started as the Saipan-raised fighter defeated Korean challenger Jae Woong Kim in their non-title bout in last Friday's Trench Warz 18: Rock & Rumble at the packed Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

Camacho, the main headliner in the featherweight title bout between Roman "Boom" Alvarez and Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig, fought in front of his hometown crowd for the first time since scoring a knockout win against Nathan Hanson in Trench Warz 5:

See WINNING on Page 26

Sonics claim U21 championship

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The 670 Sonics ruled the U21 division of the 2014 BANMI Youth League after notching a 66-60 finals win over the Ol'Aces last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Sonics, who finished second to the then unbeaten Ol'Aces in the regular season, delivered in the game that mattered the most, starting strong and playing steady in the final half after backing down in the second period to clinch the division crown.

A 14-4 scoring in the first four minutes of the winner-take-all finale put the Sonics in charge of the game early, as coach Jesse Tudela drew points from almost all the players he fielded in the match. However, the Sonics failed to hang on to the double-digit lead and even lost the driver's seat in the second period.

The Ol'Aces earned a living from the foul line in the second quarter, scoring seven straight points from the stripe midway in that period, which Ignacio Borja ended with back-to-back baskets to grab the upper hand from the Sonics, 35-29.

The seesaw battle continued in the third period with the Sonics regaining the lead, 49-46, behind the 8 points of Melvin Cadiang.

The advantage was stretched to 8 in the early goings of the fourth period, 54-46, as Jaymark De Guzman started the final canto with a triple, followed by a Jack Aranda short jumper.

With the Sonics threatening to pull away, the Ol'Aces Kobee Mendoza decided to take charge, but paid a big price, as he fell hard on the ground

See SONICS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The 670 Sonics' Bryle Alegre goes up for a layup against the Ol'Aces' Ignacio Borja, left, and Jimmy Tudela during their title game in the U21 division of the BANMI youth caging last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.